



# A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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A. S. FORREST



'Merry Xmas" for

Dear Gretchen &  
Charles,

from.

Uncle Wm & Aunt Hattie,

1923.





A TOUR THROUGH OLD  
PROVENCE

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AVIGNON.

[Frontispiece.]



# A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

BY

A. S. FORREST

WITH 108 ILLUSTRATIONS IN HALF-TONE AND LINE  
DRAWN BY THE AUTHOR

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## FOREWORD

SOUTHWARDS from Valence, the Rhone flows swiftly and silently through a fertile and picturesque valley, the river broadening as the valley widens. The undulating valley is filled with vineyards and farms, amidst which are scattered houses and villages innumerable, with here and there on rising ground the ruins of an ancient castle or the grey mass of a city or town of some importance. From the banks of the river, as far as the eye can reach in every direction, the land was known in Cæsar's time as *Provincia* or *The Province*, although the term *Provence* is in these modern times only applied to the extreme south-eastern portion.

The wayfarer, in this land of sunshine and fertility, passing through its villages and visiting its towns, will continually meet with those relics, ruins, and remains which are left like footprints by races, dynasties, and empires long since passed away. Some of these footprints are nearly effaced, but others stand out to-day in

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## FOREWORD

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clear and distinct outline, recalling whole histories of bygone days. The very appearance of the people, of their buildings, their manners and customs are as reminiscent of their remote ancestry as the ancient monuments to be found in their midst.

Heredity and environment are both important factors in the making of a race, and it may be that the blue skies and sunlit landscapes, with their lovely distant prospects, have had as large a share in moulding the character of the inhabitants of this land to-day as the traits and tendencies inherited from Phoceans, Gauls, and Romans. Whatever may be the cause, there is something about this region that makes an irresistible appeal to strangers from northern lands. Romance is written so plainly on its face that even "he who motors may read," and every day spent among its towns, villages, and castles is filled with vivid pictures of many of the more illustrious periods of civilisation.



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# AVIGNON





## I

### AVIGNON

FROM whatever direction Avignon is approached, the dignity of its battlements, the profusion of its belfries, and the towering majesty of its remarkable palace, call forth the unstinted admiration of the most surfeited sightseer. But it is from the river that the finest view of the City of the Popes can be obtained.

The silent gliding waters of the winding Rhone flow in their fleet course past many a noble town and castle, but in the whole of their long voyage past none to compare with the glorious town of Avignon.

The richness of the surrounding fields and vineyards dotted with foliage of varied shape and hue, the extensive plains, with many a rugged promontory, are a fit setting for the stern and rigid palace that guards the Papal town. From the eastern horizon the noble Alps look across the great fertile plain to their distant neighbours the Cevennes. These two mountain chains enclose the ex-

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tensive valley of the Rhone, a valley that has been inhabited in turn by Gauls, Greeks, and Romans, all of whom have left their marks indelible upon its face. This



valley has been richly prized by those who set foot upon its soil. The mild climate, the rare atmosphere, and clear blue sky of Provence, have combined to produce populations profoundly appreciative of the joys and pleasures of existence, who have each in their own way given expression to their feelings and emotions in their arts and letters. The Romans sought expression in their buildings, the Goths in rich and fanciful designs, and the mingled race of Provençals in their songs and lays.

Here is a land that teems with the works of man's imagination, met with continually in the massed for-

tresses and embattled monasteries, the Roman playgrounds and places of amusement, the peaceful cloisters and places of worship.

Avignon, the Avenio of the Romans, was a Celtic city (the Sovereign of the Waters) before its conquest by the great empire-makers of the pre-Christian era ; but its character was changed out of all recognition by the mediæval inhabitants of the town. It is known to-day as the City of the Popes, and its fame is inseparably connected with the seventy years during which seven of the Popes had their residence within its protecting walls. The " Babylonish Captivity," as it was called by



Petrarch, which lasted from 1305 to 1375, made history not only for Avignon but for the rest of Christendom.

The events which led up to the serious step of breaking

the continuity of the Papal residence at the Holy See of Rome are worth recalling. During the latter part of the first millennium of the Christian era the power of the Papacy had assumed alarming sway over the many small States into which Europe had become divided after the fall of the Western Roman Empire.

The Papal Empire that had arisen had inspired the world anew with the ancient terror of the name of Rome. The occupant of St. Peter's Chair was the maker and unmaker of kings. From the beginning of the eleventh century this power had been growing, to the great satisfaction of Churchmen and the keen chagrin of the laity. The scheming ambition of the Popes knew no bounds, and it culminated in the claim of Boniface VIII. for the absolute supremacy of the Papacy over all temporal authorities. It was just at the close of the thirteenth century that the inevitable conflict came.

Two of the most powerful kings in Europe, Philip the Fair of France and Edward the First of England, began at the same time to lay an arbitrary hand upon the revenues of the Church. The English King resisted the commands of the Pope, who was compelled to give way. Philip was not so fortunate in his quarrel with Rome,

which in the first year of the next century came to a head. A legate sent by Boniface to Philip behaved himself so insolently that the French Monarch placed him under arrest. The Pope, enraged at the indignity offered to his representative, issued a series of Bulls to the King and Clergy of France, in one of which he set up the claim that the King of France was subject to Rome



in temporal as in spiritual affairs. This was the first time that such a contention had been explicitly put forward in an official document, and Philip at once replied by a rude letter, by publicly burning the Papal Bulls, and by calling together the three great Orders of his Kingdom, the Nobles, Commons, and Clergy. This was the first Convocation in France of the States General, an assembly which four centuries later was to play so important a part in the Great Revolution.

Boniface strained the Papal Authority to the breaking-



point, reached at last when one of Philip's nobles, joined with some of the discontented Colonna in Italy, arrested the Pope himself when on a visit to his native town, Anagni, a few miles out of Rome. Although the townsfolk eventually came to the outraged Pope's assistance and liberated him, the indignity was more than the choleric Boniface could stand, and he died, some say of temper, others of a broken heart. The reaction against the Papacy had set in, and Benedict XI., successor to Boniface, was neither willing nor able to continue the struggle. Anxious to reinstate the Papacy in the good opinion of France, he rescinded the excommunication of Philip and abandoned all pretensions to temporal power.

His occupancy of the pontifical chair was, however, of short duration. His death brought about a new crisis, for the French and Italian cardinals, met in conclave, could not agree; and for months the election of the successor to the chair was delayed. Eventually the powerful influence of Philip was successful in securing the election of a Frenchman, Bertrand de Goth or d'Agoust, Archbishop of Bordeaux, whom he compelled to assume the title of Clement V. and remove the court to France.



A. FARMHOUSE.  
NEAR. AVIGNON.



Provence about fifty years before this period had passed to Charles I. of Anjou, who inherited the kingdom through his wife, a daughter of the fourth Raymond Berenger. When their son Charles II. came into his patrimony of Anjou and Provence, with Naples, he united them, and during his reign great prosperity came to the kingdom. But upon his death, in 1305, a dispute arose amongst his son and grandsons, their rival claims being argued at great length in Avignon before Clement V. who was the feudal superior of the Neapolitan kingdom. His decision favoured Robert the son of Charles II., who therefore succeeded to the throne, but afterwards left a troubled inheritance to his granddaughter the unfortunate Joan.

History is conflicting with regard to the character of this Princess, and she has her partisans to-day, in the same way as Mary, Queen of Scots, whose tragic story is very similar.

Joan, or Joanna, reared at Naples in the midst of every luxury and refinement that the age could offer, was in her early years betrothed to her cousin Andrew (a son of Carobert, King of Hungary), who, although brought up along with his wife at the Neapolitan court,

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inherited the rough tastes and barbarous manners of his native country.

Their union was the foundation of tragedy and civil war, for Andrew soon grew imperious, and the princely couple drifted apart ; the husband to assert an independent right to the crown which he only held by virtue of his wife. He was urging Pope Clement VI. to consent to his coronation when he was assassinated, some say at the direct instigation of Joan herself.

The rumours connecting the widow with the crime soon spread, and Louis of Hungary, brother of the murdered man, invaded Naples to seek revenge. Joan, who had taken to herself another husband, fled with him to Provence to take shelter under the Papal See and to raise money and an army for the protection of her kingdom.

The Pope, after a solemn investigation into the circumstances of the murder, acquitted Joan of the charge. Taking advantage of her pressing need, he bargained with her to sell Avignon to him for eighty thousand crowns. This transaction did little credit to Clement, for although he and his successors retained the town thus acquired, the money was never paid—possibly, as is

thought, on the ground that Joan was amply compensated by receiving the Papal absolution for the murder of her husband. Certainly Clement would have no



scruples, for his Court was as licentious as it was magnificent. Amidst its regal splendour gay and beautiful women played an important part, the Pope himself not



impervious to their influence. The Countess of Turenne, suspected of being one of his mistresses, and as rapacious as she was handsome, unblushingly sold positions and preferments procured by her ascendancy.

Joan's subsequent matrimonial career, although full of variety (she had in all four husbands), was unproductive of issue ; and her presumptive heir, Charles, Duke of Durazzo, offended at her last venture in matrimony, took forcible possession of Naples, and, to preclude all opposition to his newly acquired sovereignty, the deposed Joan was by his orders removed from his path by assassination.

Avignon was ancient and illustrious before the Popes descended upon it and added a fresh and brilliant page to its already voluminous history. Far back in pre-Roman times, and even before the coming of the adventurous Phoceans, it is probable that some prehistoric Celts had built a city on these same rocky foundations beside the silvery Rhone. The Phoceans from Marseilles saw its possibilities, for under them it became one of the richest cities in the Narbonne, and when, at their invitation, the Romans overran the valley and drove out the barbarians who threatened it and every other fertile spot in Europe, they added further to the fame of Avignon.

Very few vestiges of the ancient Roman town remain to-day. Successive ages quarried amongst the massive Roman constructions for material to rebuild their town according to their altering needs. In the Rue des Grottes, a narrow little street, two blocks away from the west front of the Papal Palace, the cellars of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century houses are formed by the arcades of what must have been a vast Roman building ; and minute investigators of the town have fancied they could trace the foundations of a theatre near to the Place St. Pierre. But coins and fragments of marble mosaics, Greek and Latin inscriptions, have been found in plenty all through the city, and are now housed and guarded in the Calvet Museum, one of the chief attractions of the town.

That Avignon should be lacking in more important Roman monuments such as are the pride of the neighbouring towns of Arles, Nîmes, Orange, and others is quite easily accounted for. When one reads of the numerous invasions and sieges which the city suffered at the hands of vast barbarian hordes, who swept over the land like a devastating tornado during the fourth century of our era, and of the perpetual internecine

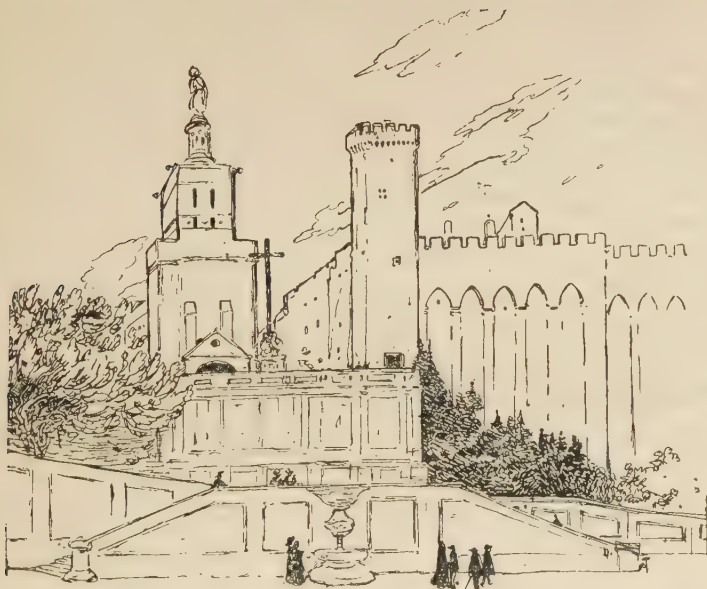
strife that during the dark ages took place between Visigoths, Franks, Burgundians, and Saracens, one no longer feels astonished at the absence of Roman remains of any magnitude.

The true history of the Avignon of to-day starts in the twelfth century, when, under circumstances of which the details are now obscured by the mists of time, it became a republic with its own laws and privileges, endowments and revenues, only restricted by the overlordship of its Bishop.

The intermarriages of the feudal families, their numerous offspring, and the frequent divisions and subdivisions of territories and estates led to endless changes in the map of the southern counties of France. The quarrels and disputes of the Counts of Toulouse, Provence, and Forcalquier as to their rival rights of suzerainty over the town led to the setting up of a republic in Avignon.

The Cathedral of Notre Dame des Doms, which at first glance might be mistaken for a continuation of the great mass of buildings which constitute the Palace of the Popes, is one of the earliest monuments or buildings in the town. Standing on an elevated site, the summit of the great Rock of the Doms, it was constructed early in

the twelfth century, and remains to-day a choice specimen of Romanesque architecture. Like all the buildings in Provence, it has been carefully studied and severely criticised, various and conflicting opinions have been



CATHEDRAL AND PAPAL  
PALACE . AVIGNON

expressed about it, and different dates assigned to it. From the apex of the small octagonal structure that surmounts the great square tower of the Cathedral, a gigantic gilded figure of the Virgin looks down upon the town and surrounding country.

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It is, as the French writers would say, "in the taste of the eighteenth century," hideous and out of place, a blatant, gaudy anachronism that vividly illustrates the truth of the old adage, "Tastes differ." Fragments of an old Latin inscription, removed from its porch and now in the Calvet Museum, have been cited by some as giving a history of this building. This stone document claims that the church was "founded by St. Martha, consecrated by St. Ruf, enlarged by the first Christian Emperor Constantine, destroyed by the Saracens, saved by Charles Martel, and restored by the munificence of Charlemagne, and that Jesus Christ came to consecrate it with His own hand."

But this legend has been proved to be as unreliable as so many other ecclesiastical traditions of mediæval times. The porch has also been the subject of controversy. The pillars with their beautiful Corinthian capitals are either the remains of some more ancient building, probably a classic temple, or perhaps mediæval copies of the antique. Above the door are the faded and damp-stained remains of a fresco of the fourteenth century. The figures of God the Father and two supporting angels can be made out, and bear strong traces of Byzantine mannerisms.

If they are, as has been suggested, the work of Simone Martini of Siena, he displays in this work little of the genius of his great contemporaries in art.

And here it must be said that Avignon is not so rich in early paintings or frescoes of the first order as one would expect so mediæval a town to be.

The church is lit entirely from the dome, and the light that streams down from the eight windows above the choir is hardly sufficient to penetrate into the five deep vaulted bays of the nave. The style of the whole interior, for want of a better name, is called Romanesque, a style of the transition period between the rigid simplicity of the Roman times and the flowing ornamentation of the Middle Ages. Many of the most cherished monuments of the Cathedral were desecrated, pillaged, and destroyed during the Revolution, Spanish prisoners were lodged in it, and generally it was about as badly used as any of the religious buildings in Provence.

It, however, still retains the fine marble chair which is assumed to be the ancient Papal throne, with the lion of St. Mark and the ox of St. Luke carved in deep relief on either side of it.

In the small chapel to the right of the choir stands the



lovely tomb of Pope John XXII., an excellent piece of fourteenth-century pointed Gothic work which suffered much mutilation during the Revolution, when it was dislodged from its place and the statue of its occupant stolen together with the statuettes that adorned the niches round its base. The tomb was restored in the middle of the last century, and is now at rest in its original position within the little chapel founded by John XXII. himself. It is a work of great beauty, of slender spires and delicate mouldings, of pillared niches with finely pierced canopies, of tapering columns and richly crocketed and perforated gables: a monument all too elegant for the mentally and physically deformed Pontiff to whose memory it is erected.

John XXII. was a man of humblest origin, Jacques d'Euse by name, born in 1244 at Euse. Son of a shoemaker, he rose to the most elevated position of his time; his talents, opportunities, and craftiness combining to bring about his elevation to the Papal Chair. Superstitious and cruel, he stooped to methods of revenge that match in diabolic ferocity the most sanguinary reprisals of the buccaneers. One of his clergy, a bishop, was by his command flayed alive and torn to pieces by wild horses.



In his later years John got into sore trouble with the theological authorities by promulgating the heretical doctrine "that the Saints at death fell asleep and did not enjoy the beatific vision till after the resurrection." Whether this was a genuine conviction with him or no, he was forced by the religious opinion of his contemporaries to make a semblance of retracting it, but his monument seems to suggest that he believed it was to be his only resting-place until the last great day. His religious intolerance brought the Papacy into grave disrepute, but his grasping avarice greatly benefited its treasury, for at his death it was found that he had amassed for it eighteen millions of gold florins in bullion and about seven millions in plate and jewels.

From the garden of the Rocher des Doms, which rises abruptly to a height of three hundred feet above the river and looks across the island of Barthelasse to the town of Villeneuve, there stretches far into the distance a landscape which excites the imagination of the romantic poet, delights the eye of the artist, and even moves the prosaic to express themselves in superlatives.

The old bridge of St. Benezet, or, to be more exact, the three arches that remain of it, is a distinguished relic of

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the twelfth-century Avignon. It ends abruptly about two-thirds of the distance across the left branch of the river, which at this point is divided by the low-lying island of Barthelasse. Grey in colour, desolate, for



traffic has long ceased to clank and rattle over its narrow causeway, this "fragment" gives a very good idea of what the ancient bridge must have been when it extended completely over the two channels of the river, and the island that divides them, right up to the foot of the

menacing square tower of Philip the Fair that guards the opposite bank.

The silent flowing river with unruffled surface breaks into sound as it rushes past these remaining piers. The gurgling swish of the hurrying waters and the sparkling little ripples occasioned by the resistance of the solid masonry, are the only breaks in the calm monotonous silence with which the river makes its way down the great flat valley to the sea. The ancient bridge is deserted, "all the world" no longer dances, if ever it did attempt such a feat, upon the parapetless ten-foot way; and the ancient rhyme—

" Sur le pont d'Avignon, tout le monde danse, danse,  
Sur le pont d'Avignon, tout le monde danse en rond,"

would to-day be more applicable to the little white ripples that dance and sparkle in the sunlight as they burst forth from under the venerable archways. Fifteen other arches continued the bridge in days gone by, but the townsfolk got tired at last of continually making good the damage unceasingly inflicted by their enemies upon this highway, and since the latter part of the eighteenth century it has remained the fragment that one sees to-day.

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The Bridge of Avignon when it completely spanned the Rhone was not complete without its legend, a pretty little Provençal story that has lasted until to-day. The simple folk of Avignon relate how a little shepherd boy from Viverais, higher up the river, heard of the many accidents which befell the inhabitants, who had no other means of crossing the Rhone save by boats, accidents



which resulted in great loss of life. This little shepherd, highly favoured by the Saints, was, like Joseph of old, a dreamer of dreams and a seer of visions—dreams and visions that roused and inspired him to go to the rescue of the hapless folk whose lives were in peril every time they crossed the rapids of the Rhone in their frail craft. Making his way on foot along the river bank to Avignon, he presented himself to the Bishop of the town; told him of his dreams and urged him to construct a bridge.

Unfavourably received both by the Bishop and the Provost, the former laughing at and the latter chastising him, he demonstrated the inspired nature of his mission by carrying to the river bank with his unaided hands a huge boulder of rock to serve as the foundation-stone.

This miraculous act, together with his passionate pleading, roused the townspeople, and without further delay the bridge was commenced. Poor Benezet, dying before his life-work was completed in 1177, was canonised by the grateful inhabitants, who have since done full justice to the little shepherd boy to whom the town owed one of its most useful glories and lasting treasures. A tiny chapel dedicated to St. Benezet stands upon the first pier of the ancient bridge, and mass is still said there every 14th of April, the Saint's Day.

A lot of water has flowed under the arches of the bridge since the days when brave knights in shining armour, proud priests in sumptuous robes, poets, painters, soldiers, courtiers, and the thousand and one mortals of commoner clay passed over the realised dream of the shepherd lad. It has served its turn, and now belongs entirely to the bygone age of chivalry and romance.

One of its contemporaries still exists near the Avignon

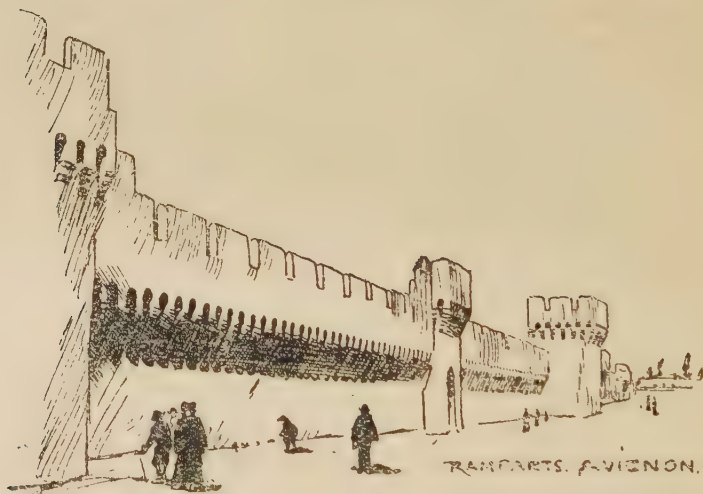
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of to-day—the ruined church of St. Ruf that stands on the Tarascon road just outside the city walls. It is all that is left of a twelfth-century monastery, built by some canons of the Cathedral, who, on separating from their brother clergy, retired to this spot, whither an ancient



oratory, said to have been founded by St. Ruf, attracted them. The Sanctuary and tower, or belfry, are all that remain of the once extensive series of buildings, but the carved capitals of the columns and fine bold apse bear evidence that it was a church equal in beauty of workmanship to the Cathedral itself.



The buildings already mentioned are the oldest in Avignon, for the ramparts that exist to-day replace the older ones which were destroyed after the great siege in 1226. This siege was one of the last incidents in a war which for wellnigh twenty years wrought devastation throughout the southern provinces of France.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century there existed a sect known as the Valdenses, or Albigenses, which had become so strong that Princes and Nobles were embracing its tenets to the vexation of the Papacy. What exactly were the beliefs of these heretics it is difficult to determine, as the accounts handed down to us come from prejudiced sources.

There were those who alleged that the Albigenses professed a distorted Christianity, grafted on to a degraded pagan mysticism, whilst others, and amongst these were some of the persecutors, averred that nothing could be more Christianlike than their behaviour or more blameless than their lives. Claud, Archbishop of Turin, testifies that they were "perfect, irreproachable, without reproach among men, addicting themselves with all their might to the service of God."

Whatever were their beliefs they held them strongly,

and were prepared to suffer for them even to the death ; but more probably it was their determined opposition to and contempt for the Papal Hierarchy that brought down upon them its most bitter hatred and unrelenting oppression. The sect was particularly strong in Languedoc, and from the town of Albi in that province they took their name. The conflict of the faiths at last reached such a pitch that the imperious Pope Innocent III. found it necessary to take steps to preserve his spiritual authority.

A crusade was proclaimed, and all Christendom was urged to take up arms under the Pontifical banner for the suppression of the heretics. Raymond VI., Count of Toulouse, an independent sovereign, who, whilst in no way sharing their beliefs, was averse to joining Rome in a war upon his own subjects, refused the Papal appeal for assistance, and was promptly excommunicated. The awful Ban of the Church was pronounced upon him by a Legate named Peter of Castelnau, and one of Raymond's followers, in an excess of loyalty, put an end with his sword to any such utterances from the same source in the future. The assassination of his representative thoroughly enraged the Pope, who issued a Bull im-

puting that Raymond was influenced by the devil, and urging all the counts, barons, and knights of Southern France to pursue his person and occupy and retain his domains.

Thus was the cupidity of adventurous knights appealed to, and whilst the legions of the Church ostensibly fought for the upholding of the faith, Raymond of Toulouse was forced into the position of defending his inheritance. Prompted by fear or contrition, or perchance a mixture of both, Raymond underwent a most humiliating penance in his anxiety

4. COUNTRYMAN.



to propitiate the enraged Innocent. Strong indeed must have been the motive which induced so powerful a

prince to submit to being stripped naked from head to foot, save for a linen cloth round his waist for decency's sake, and being thus led nine times round the pretended Martyr's grave in the Church at St. Gilles, his naked shoulders chastised the while with rods. The penance was accepted and Raymond was absolved, but his possessions had already been divided amongst the crusaders, of whom Simon de Montfort was Chief. The Comtat Venaissin was made over to the Papal See, a transfer in which the inhabitants of the independent town of Avignon who sided with Raymond did not concur.

Through endless sieges the fortunes of the contending factions continually fluctuated. Simon de Montfort, now Count of Toulouse, succeeded in obtaining the re-excommunication of Raymond ; but the latter never forsook the practices of the Holy Church, and with true humility continued to perform his devotions at the doors of edifices whose thresholds he was forbidden to cross. At the siege of Toulouse in 1216, death put an end to the crusading career of de Montfort, but the struggle went on as bitterly as ever. Every victory of the Papal forces continued to be celebrated by a massacre of the vanquished.

Raymond VII., a more resolute and energetic man than his father, ultimately regained the whole of Languedoc, and Amaury de Montfort sought the protection of his ally Louis VIII. of France, to whom he ceded the territorial rights acquired by his father. It was whilst on his way to take possession of his new domain that Louis advanced with a powerful army upon Avignon, demanding a passage through the town that he might cross the Rhone by St. Benezet's bridge. The inhabitants rightly distrusted the wily pretext, and submitted to a siege rather than open their gates. After a spirited defence of three months' duration the town surrendered, with the stipulation that only the Legate, Romain de St. Ange, and the chief lords of the crusaders should come within its walls.

On the principle probably that faith need not be kept with heretics the pledge was broken, and the invading army entered the town, put its defenders to the sword, filled up its trenches, demolished its ramparts and towers, and pulled down its strongholds. Moreover, the citizens of Avignon were heavily fined for their adherence to a heresy which they were solemnly sworn to abjure for the future; and, as if this were not enough, they were further compelled to maintain an armed and equipped body of

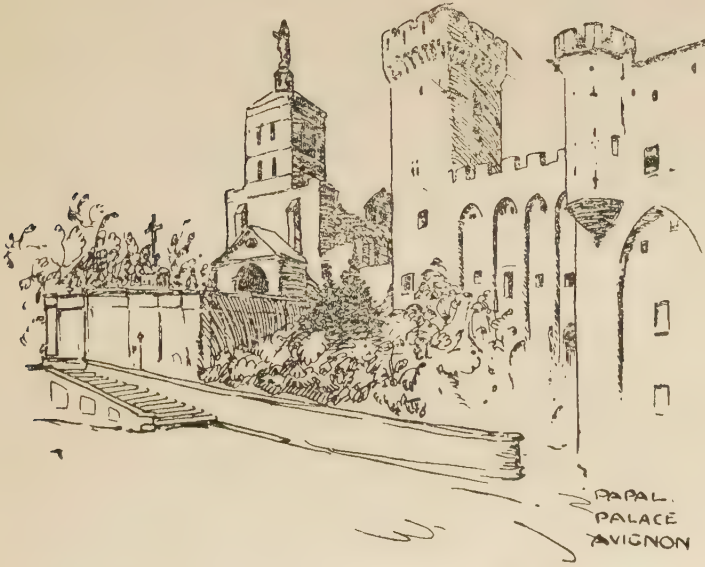
thirty men in the Holy Land to assist in the recovery of the sacred tomb from the Saracens.

When Clement V., coerced by Philip the Fair, removed the Papal See from the Holy City and established his court in Avignon, he arrived in a town as unlike the existing one as it is possible to imagine, and took up his abode in the Monastery of the Dominican Friars. For Avignon was to him merely a stop-gap, and he never relinquished the idea of reinstating the Papal Chair in Rome.

His successor, John XXII., the shoemaker's avaricious son, was not new to Avignon, having been its bishop before his elevation. He at once enlarged the small palace he had previously occupied ; but this edifice was completely swept away by the building operations of Benedict XII., who succeeded him. This Pope it was who erected the greater part of the mass of buildings which to-day form the most conspicuous and enduring feature of the town. To call it a palace was a misnomer ; it was a fortress, and one of the best examples of its period. It was a town within a town, and its designers were not so much concerned with creating a thing of beauty as in devising a refuge of irresistible strength. And yet its great plain



walls have a beauty all their own, and the eye never tires of wandering over its various surfaces, unexpected, irregular, and vast. Its plan follows the irregular shape



of the rock upon which it is founded, and was the work of succeeding Popes and their architects.

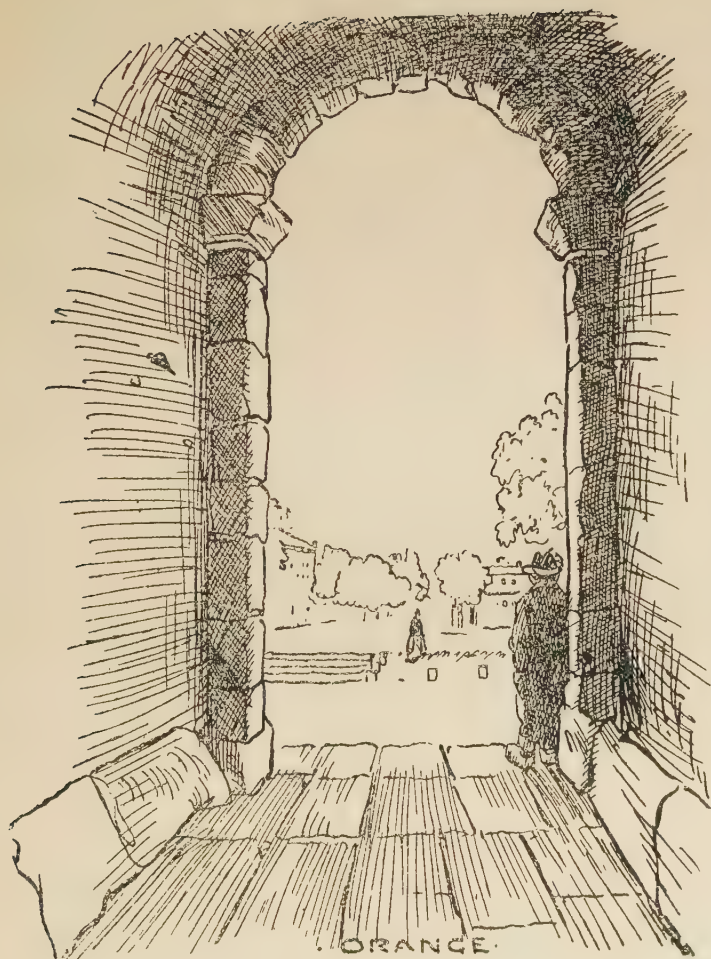
Of the seven exiled Popes, two, Benedict XII. and Clement VI., were most ambitious builders, and we are only to-day beginning to discover the true merit of the work carried out under their direction. For during the whole of the nineteenth century the buildings were in

the hands of the military, who transformed and mutilated them in adapting them to their requirements, and it is only recently that the walls with which they blocked up doors, windows, and staircases have been removed, as also the floors and partitions with which they divided the vast chapel and audience chambers.

Most of the beautiful windows, specimens of early Gothic, which originally gave character to the whole building and more particularly to the courtyard into which they looked, disappeared when the place became a barracks, and were replaced by ugly square openings, totally out of keeping with the surrounding masonry.

The utilitarian engineer had but little regard for the architectural and archæological amenities of this monument, and with ruthless hands desecrated rich carvings and rare frescoes, timbered ceilings and vaulted roofs; therefore a large expenditure of money, time, and skill will be required to restore the Palace of the Popes to anything like its former splendour.

The work of restoration is being carried out under the auspices of a Government which is animated by a spirit very different from that of many of its predecessors, and already the imposing audience hall and the magnificent





chapel above it have recovered much of their original appearance.

In the Tour Saint Jean are two chapels, one above the other, the upper dedicated to Saint Martial, a bishop of Limoges, and the lower to the Saint after whom the tower itself is named. These little chapels were decorated in the time of Clement VI., about the year 1342.

In the ceiling of the chapel of Saint Martial the vaults are covered with a series of pictures illustrating the life of the Saint. The colour is in a brilliant state of preservation, the blues and warm browns being contrasted so as to give a very rich yet soothing effect. The irregularity of the designs, placed in an arbitrary fashion in the spaces between the ribs, strikes one at first as being strangely affected ; but the figures are free and expressive in their action, some of them being finished with a searching minuteness worthy of the Sienese School at its best period. The ribs of the vault are decorated with most beautiful Arabesque patterns, very suggestive of Byzantine mosaics.

In the lower chapel the ribwork is similar but not so elaborate in detail, whilst the figures illustrating the life of St. John are on a much larger scale. Unfortunately

most of them are headless, a piece of vandalism attributed to a Corsican regiment under the command of Colonel Sebastiani, which was quartered in this part of the Palace. The incentive was not mere wanton disfigurement of the paintings, for the heads have all been neatly cut round, and most carefully removed, and the assumption is, that the soldiers earned considerable pocket-money by disposing of them to collectors. The Colonel has not been held blameless in the matter, but probably overlooked the depredations of his men because he enriched his own collection from the same source.

The frescoes in the Garde Robe, a chamber of considerable importance, have recently been brought to light. The roof of the chamber is not vaulted, but has heavy wooden beams resting upon stone corbels and supporting the floor above. The walls of this interesting room are completely covered with paintings of the fourteenth century by an unknown artist. These have been restored, and one gets a very good idea of the original state of the apartment. On a background of grass and foliage figures in fourteenth-century costumes are depicted, engaged in the pastimes of the period, hunting, fishing, falconry, and bathing. The restoration of the





INTERIOR OF CHAPEL OF ST. BENEZET, AVIGNON.



background has not been very happy, the chalky colour of the new work being a little too conspicuous.

The question of the restoration of ancient pictures,



sculptures, and buildings is rather a vexed one, but the advocates of the "let alone" policy seem to overlook the fact that ultimately little would remain, as only such

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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massive monuments as the Pyramids can resist the ceaseless ravages of time and the elements. The difficulty is to determine the right moment to set about repairs which should be neither too long delayed nor undertaken prematurely; but the process must be a perpetual one if posterity is to retain the structures and works of earlier times. The most zealous opponent of restoration could hardly take exception to the work that has been carried out in the two most important parts of the building—the great Audience Hall and the beautiful Chapel above it. The extraordinary plan of placing these two lofty buildings one above the other was a daring feat of building construction.

The internal structure of both hall and chapel is unexpectedly beautiful, for the outside of this frowning fortress gives no indication whatever of the delicate refinement of the roof vaulting, the clustered pillars, the carved capitals and corbels that it contains. The Audience Hall, or lower chamber, is divided into two naves by five clustered pillars, from which the elegant ribs of the vaulted roof outspread themselves.

This Hall, which was for half a century the chief tribunal of Christendom, is about 150 feet long, 50 feet wide, and

34 feet high, and is lit by eleven tall ogival windows, in graceful harmony with the airy vaulting of the roof. At the top of the great staircase that ascends from the entrance of the Audience Chamber there was recently "unearthed," or unwalled, the main doorway to the chapel above. This had been built over so completely by the military that its presence was for years unsuspected. It has suffered much damage, but what remains gives indication of the rich beauty it once possessed. The Chapel has no pillars, being one great nave, its vault springing from engaged clustered columns, that run up the walls between the windows. The capitals of these columns are the only carving in this vast airy hall.

The original builders, in the flights of their imagination after spaciousness, gave so little heed to the constructional problems involved in its achievement, that less inspired but more practical successors found it imperative to prop the outside wall with a great flying buttress which arches over a street running past the south side of the building, and seems to form a portion of the main building.

On the vaults of the upper bay of the Audience Hall there are fragmentary remains of the frescoes that were executed by some artist or artists of the Sieneese school.

The records of a hundred years ago show that the subjects which could be seen on the walls at that time were a "Last Judgment," "The Prophets," and a "Crucifixion."

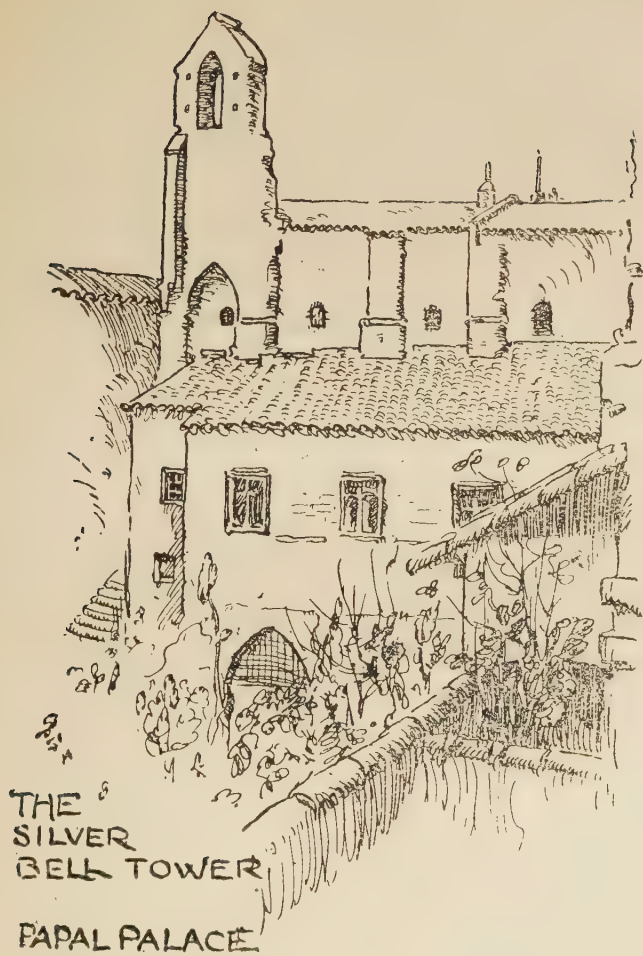
The military gentlemen of the last century are again the culprits: they could not see the merit or use of preserving such works, preferring to see the dormitories of their men whitewashed, clean, and bare, as befitted their occupation.

These few traces of early Italian artists, who were employed by the wealthy court of the Papacy, are all that now remain of what was one of the chief glories in the fourteenth century.

As one wanders through the courts, chambers, passages, prisons, and chapels of the fortress palace, the historical associations they possess fill the mind more than their present state. Page after page of history is opened up at every turn, and the Past rises before us, with its romance and war, cruelty and beauty, voluptuousness and spirituality, joys and sorrows, ambitions and disappointments, all mixed together like colours in a kaleidoscope.

The inscription that was found on the porch of the





THE  
SILVER  
BELL TOWER  
PAPAL PALACE



ancient Cathedral might well be paraphrased into one that could be placed upon the Palace.

“ Clement V. thought of it ; John XXII. founded it ; Benedict XII. built it ; Clement VI. enlarged and enriched it ; Innocent VI. added to its glory ; Urban V. chastened it ; Gregory XI. abandoned it ; the Anti-pope, Pierre de Luna, defended and jeopardised it ; the Legates vandalised it ; the Brigands of Avignon desecrated it ; the Military transformed it out of all knowledge ; and now a thoughtful Republic is endeavouring to restore it to its former state.”

Such an inscription would briefly set out the main facts of its long history for the last six hundred years.

The worldly splendour of the Papal Court at Avignon, under the Pontificates of Benedict XII. and Clement VI., was notorious throughout Christendom, and when one reads of the indolent voluptuousness and dissipations of the debauched clergy who surrounded the Papal throne, one is quite prepared to learn that the grave scandals shocked even the lax moralities of the period. It was in vain that the last three occupants of St. Peter's Chair in Avignon sought to suppress the excessive pomp and luxury of their courts. Clement VI. had left behind him a reputation for being “ a fine gentleman, a prince

munificent to profusion, a patron of the arts, but no Saint," and it is not difficult to imagine that the example of one in such exalted station was well calculated to encourage the wealthy churchmen to emulate his dissipations.

Reformers and disciplinarians were bound to be unpopular with such a society, and one cannot help feeling that when (urged by the supplications of the Italians and the fanatical entreaties and vehement persuasions of St. Catharine, who went in person to plead with the Holy Father) the earnest Gregory XI. left Avignon, he did so with a feeling of relief. At his departure, the licence of the clergy increased to such an extent that Charles V., shocked at the scandals of the Church, could endure them no longer, and sent soldiers under the command of Marshal Boucicaut to drive the Anti-pope, Pierre de Luna (Benedict XIII.), from the place. Pierre de Luna established himself in the Fortress Palace, and defended it with determination. He destroyed one of the arches of the Pont St. Benezet to cut off the approaches from the river; and from the battlements and towers of his castle directed the engines of war with his own hands on the town and townsfolk, who suffered so severely that



FRONT  
ENTRANCE TO  
THE PAPAL PALACE

over a hundred houses and four thousand of the inhabitants were destroyed during the siege.

After months of fighting the King's troops stormed

the fortress, and Pierre de Luna saved himself by means of secret passages and staircases leading to a vault from whence he got to the river side, and escaping across the Rhone, sought refuge under the protection of the King of Spain in his native country. Here, with two vicars, or priests, he kept up the pretence of being still the Pope, and each day from the top of a tower he blessed his distant friends and cursed his enemies. At his death his two followers, both of whom he had made cardinals, met in conclave, and one elected the other "Pope." The farce of this schism was ended by both of the exiled cardinals being bribed into reconciliation to Rome; one being made Archbishop of Toledo, and the other Archbishop of Seville.

It was during this siege that the fire broke out by which the Salle Brulle got its name; but there is another story which attributes the origin of this name to the brutality of one of the Papal Legates, when, inviting a number of the leading citizens of the town to a great feast in the chamber, he left them in the middle of the banquet and blew up the happy party with gunpowder.

The reason for this "Gunpowder treason" was, that a near relative of the Legate had been assassinated by some

citizens for taking liberties with a young maiden of good family belonging to the town. Whichever version is correct, the name has stuck tenaciously to this chamber. There is another tragedy associated with this Palace which is famous for evermore. The massacre, which took place in the Glacière, or Ice Tower, one awful night in the middle of November 1791, at the outbreak of the Revolution, set a fiendish example to the lawless brutality which, in 1793, expressed itself in a similar way in the Abbaye Prison in Paris. Jourdain Coupetête, a fierce revolutionary, had earned his nickname two years previously by decapitating the corpses of the two Body-guards in the Marble Court of the Palace at Versailles, at the "insurrection of women." In June 1791 he was leading a body of nearly 15,000 men, who called themselves the Brigands of Avignon. Jourdain





had dubbed himself "General," and with his associates was the terror of the Royalists.

L'Escuyer, one of the Patriot leaders, accompanied by the crowd, entered the Church of the Cordeliers to hear Mass, or to mock at it. The aristocratic Papists (the Church and Royalist faction) resented this, and their hot southern blood being roused, the two parties came to blows. In the *mêlée* L'Escuyer was killed, and this roused the Patriots to demand an inquest. Impatient of delay, the Brigands under Jourdain took possession of the Papal Palace, and there imprisoned some hundred and thirty persons—men, women, and children—in the dungeons of the Glacière Tower.

Then establishing themselves into a court-martial, with Jourdain as the judge, these Brigands very quickly disposed of all the prisoners with the naked sword—a most ghastly slaughter that makes the blood run cold.

When the troops under General Choisi came to the rescue, Jourdain could not hold the castle, but was forced to take flight, escaping through the secret passages as Pierre de Luna had done four hundred years previously.

If Avignon were to be deprived of her grand Papal Palace, she would still have enough churches and

monasteries left to give evidence either of the great popularity her church enjoyed, or of the power wielded in the Middle Ages by the religious orders.

Churches and monasteries are scattered lavishly through the town, and from the rich stores of relics still possessed



by them, some slight idea may be gleaned of the wealth they possessed before the terrible Revolution. Everywhere the stranger goes the story is the same. Vergers and guides tell of the past glories of this town : this stood here and that there ; here was a monument, there a shrine ; but—they vanished in the Revolution.

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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Terrible were these revolutionists of the South ; they gathered their harvests of rich plunder from the Church's hand with as little concern as a farmer gathers his corn, or as a beggar his rags. Nothing was sacred from their vandal hands, and the tables were turned upon the Church, which in the centuries long gone had taken its heavy toll from all the country round.

What a grotesque picture the Revolution presents ! Grim satire on the vanity of riches, the pomp of ceremony and fleetingness of power, and the emptiness of rank. Riches took wings, or rather were carried off on donkeys' backs to be melted down into coin and turned into bread for hungry mouths. Ceremonies, even the most sacred, were mocked at, and burlesque processions of ecclesiastical pageants excited the ribald laughter of the crowd. The powerful were humbled to the dust, and rank lost its head under the cruel slicing invention of Dr. Guillotin.

The Royalist faction in Avignon had always been associated with the Order of the " White Penitents," and in the same way the " Black Penitents " had inherited the independence and rebellious spirit that animated the followers of Count Raymond of Toulouse. These rival factions, whose original opposition had been mainly

religious, had now become political, and on the fall of Napoleon at Waterloo their differences became more accentuated and violent. The Royalists were in the ascendancy, and they revenged themselves upon their political and religious enemies with all the fanatical fervour of their Southern nature.

The aristocratic and religious party had much to remember. The Glacière massacres of 1791 were perpetrated upon their class, and as in 1795 the Royalist libertines in Paris had indulged in ghastly reprisals against the red-capped revolutionaries, the White Penitents followed in Avignon the fashion set them by the capital. The enforced submission to the restored Bourbon Dynasty in July 1815 aroused the bitterest resentment of the Black Penitents and their followers, just as the restoration of Napoleon had done their opponents earlier in March of the same year.

At Carpentras, about fifteen miles from Avignon, a small garrison of the republicans, who had kept the tri-colour floating until July 15, were shot down by the Royalist Volunteers, although they had surrendered. Fanatical crowds of Royalists directed their hatred and anger against the Protestant section of the community.



STREET STEPS. IN CARPENTRAS

Vindictive murder and pillage spread all over the country towns and villages. "The White Terror" of 1815 is a thing to remember, or rather to forget. The diabolical

outrages of Jourdain were equalled, if not surpassed, by the White Penitent Pointu, the Avignon murderer, a leader of a band as ferocious and bloodthirsty as himself. The military and civil authorities were powerless to check the excesses of the fanatical horde that rode roughshod over law and order, morality, decency, and ordinary human feeling.

Marseilles, Nîmes, Uzès, Avignon, Arles, and Carpentras were all involved in the White Terror, and one can hardly credit the details of the cruel crimes committed. Among the victims to the insensate Royalists was Marshal Brune, passing through on his way from Marseilles to Paris to defend his conduct to the Government. On reaching Avignon he sought out quarters in the Hôtel de la Poste. The news of his arrival had spread along with sinister stories as to his doings during the Revolution of 1789, and a great mob assembled around the hotel, broke in and shot the Marshal in cold blood. His body was on its way to burial when the crowd forced the bearers to change their course and proceed to the river-side, where a wooden bridge spanned the river. From this they threw the body of the Marshal into the silent Rhone. The ribald crowd fired shots into the body as it floated down the



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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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stream, a proceeding which they termed "military honours." On the arch of the bridge they wrote "The Tomb of Marshal Brune." The river, however, refused



the honour, and after twice being washed ashore, the corpse was taken and buried by two men, who recognised it. The Marshal's widow, eventually, had the body disinterred and embalmed. At her instigation a public



trial was held, at which the memory of the dead man was cleared of the charge of suicide and the body buried at Rioni.

This is one story ; a sidelight on the happenings in Beautiful Provence at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The Papal Palace in Avignon stands steadfast amidst all the changes that have come to the city, for its outward features have successfully resisted the incessant hammerings of time. The work of internal renovation goes steadily on, whilst the white dust raised by the masons, who sing at their work, settles in every conceivable resting-place, much to the discomfort of the inhabitants, especially when the "mistral" sweeps down and drives this dust, like snow, before it. The old motto of the city

"Windy Avignon, liable to plague when it has not the wind and plagued with the wind when it has it,"

still applies, if the plague is interpreted to mean dust.

The inhabitants have been easily moulded by the influence of modernity, and their principal street boasts of electric light and trams. Fashion finds ardent devotees

in the provincial town, who worship at her shrine with as much, if not greater, zeal than her votaries in Paris, London, or New York. The café and the restaurant are held in high esteem, and, as in all French towns, occupy an important place in the civil life. The hour 'twixt sundown and the most important of the day, when all Avignon sits around the well-spread dinner tables, is devoted to the cafés; and these clubs of the people, deserted and idle at some hours, are full of joyful life.

On winter evenings the temporary stoves that stand prominently in the middle of these salons are surrounded by cold-footed mortals, who rest their extremities upon the encircling fenders. Friends meet, and seated around marble tables consume café, beer, bright-coloured syrups, and absinthe according to their fancy. Absinthe is still a popular drink throughout Provence, in spite of reasoned appeals from the medical fraternity for its discontinuance. Respectable womenfolk frequent the cafés with their male relatives and friends, and sip sweet sickly syrups with the rest. Excess is rare, almost unheard of. Cards are played, the stakes usually being the cost of the entertainment. During the hour or so before dinner the café is supreme.

The old folk in Avignon are all happy-looking ; the men especially are a jolly set of fellows, and although the snow of years falls on their heads and never melts, their hearts



are young and warm, secure from Time's blighting frosts. They have studied the art of living, under their blue skies, and have mastered the difficult business.

The girls and women are particularly well favoured, dark,

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

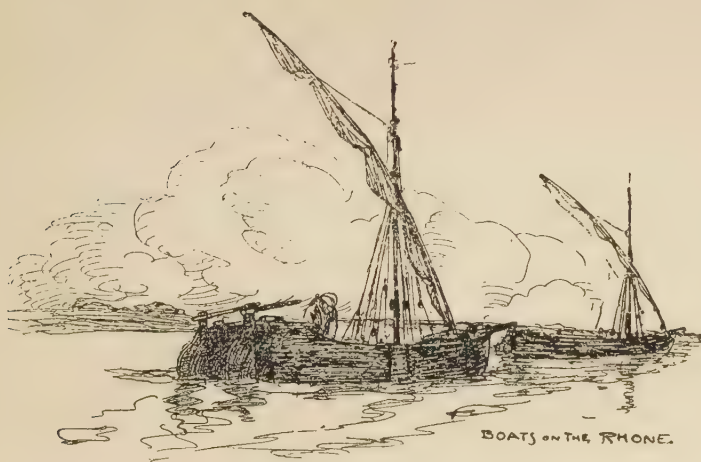
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as becomes their Southern origin, well featured, favouring the Grecian rather than the Roman type. They have less of the imperious self-conscious dignity of their sisters in Spain and other Latin countries, and seem frank and more human and in touch with the life around them. The Church finds in them its chief adherents, faithful still in a country where once everybody believed and few inquired, and now, where few believe and all ask questions. New vistas of thought were opened up in Provence during the Revolution epoch, and ever since the view has widened. In the churches nearly all the little brass plates on the prie-dieu chairs have the prefix Mme. or Mlle. engraved upon them. One seldom comes across Monsieur.

In summer, when the heat of the brilliant day gives place to the lovely glow of the Provençal evening, all Avignon sits outside around the tables that trespass in careless fashion upon the pavements. The gossip of the day goes round amidst unrestrained laughter and merriment. The café on the pavement is as truly a Gallic institution as the " Bullring " is Spanish. Spain carried her " institution " to her remotest colonies, and France has done the same with the café.

The scene on a summer evening in the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville in Avignon is but a repetition on a smaller scale of what may be seen on any evening from one year's end to the other in the Cannebière at Marseilles, or farther



distant still, across the Mediterranean in the Place du Gouvernement in the French city of Algiers.

The Romans introduced their great national institutions for amusement, the amphitheatre and the circus, into nearly all their colonies, no matter how distant, and the modern Gaul has emulated the older and far greater coloniser in this respect. Even on the borders of the Great Desert the outside café is firmly planted amongst

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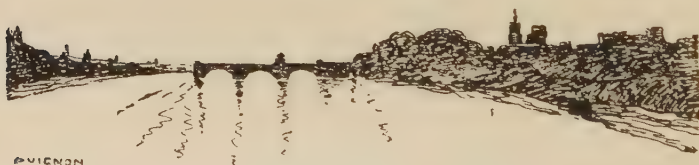
## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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a people who boast a longer civilisation than their conquerors—a feat which the Romans found impossible, for the amphitheatre of Rome made no headway amongst the conquered Greeks.

But the Place, with all its gay life upon a summer evening, is not a lasting memory of Avignon. The picture that remains upon the mind is the view from the sus-



pension bridge, just where it reaches the isle of Barthelasse. From this point of vantage Avignon, bathed in the evening glow, assumes a thoroughly mediæval aspect. The dark masses of the Rocks of the Dom, the Cathedral, the Papal Palace, the church spires and belfries are all softened and mellowed in the mystic light of the after-glow in the west, until fancy suggests that the intervening years have, in some subtle way, been bridged over, and the beholder is back in those days when the proud prelates ruled like kings, nay despots, in this fortress town beside the Rhone.

## VILLENEUVE





## II

### VILLENEUVE

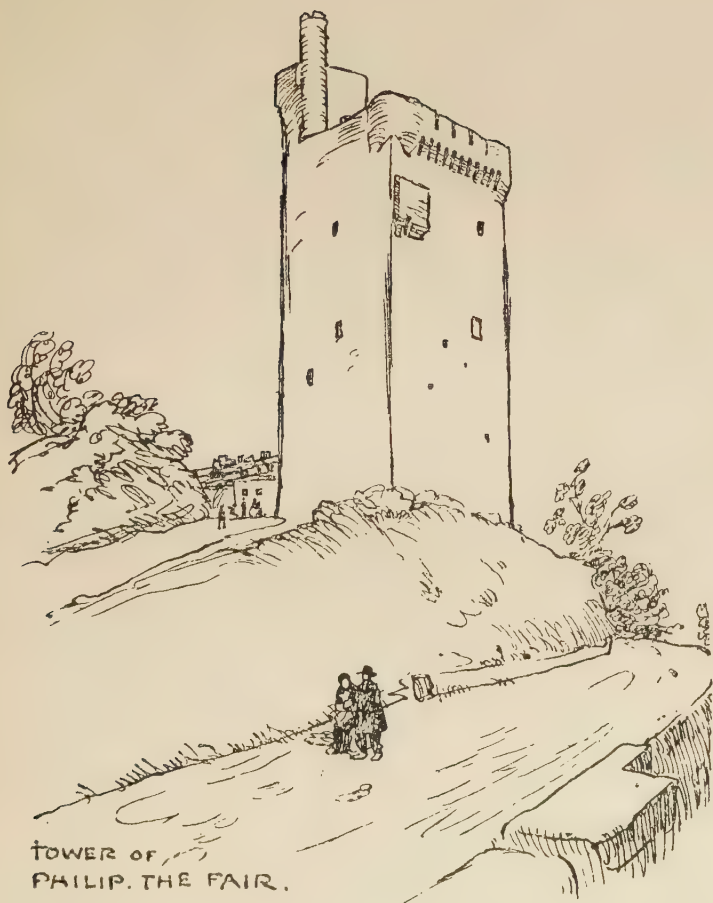
THE modern approach to the town of Villeneuve passes the Tower of Philip the Fair, a huge square block of masonry, erected early in the fourteenth century on the west bank of the river, at the spot where the old Bridge of St. Benezet reached the shore. The position was such that whoever held this tower had complete command of the bridge, and could render it useless to the inhabitants of Avignon when any conflict arose. Its presence here proves how determined Philip was to have the Papacy under his complete control, and at the time of its construction it was well-nigh impregnable, for it embodied the latest improvements known to the military genius of that day.

Before this period the battlements of fortresses and castles were simply a series of embrasures and merlons with narrow oylets perforating the latter. The engines of war used in laying siege to these buildings were great

battering-rams, with iron points, which laboured incessantly at the lower portions of the defences, until a breach sufficiently large to give passage to the attacking party was effected. The defenders' reply to this mode of attack was to lower cords or chains from the battlements, and with them entangle the battering-ram so as to put it out of action.

The besieging party's efforts were, therefore, engaged in preventing the defenders from leaning over the parapets ; the archers and bowmen directing their arrows and quarrels at any and every head appearing at the embrasures above. Throughout the crusades this was the manner of defence and attack, and an improvement was introduced by a system of covering the battlements with temporary galleries, projecting over and supported upon wooden beams, thrust through holes left for the purpose in the masonry. This gallery was roofed with wood and tiles, whilst the floor had gaps between the planks through which the defenders could let down their ropes and chains or pour molten lead, burning sulphur, stones and other missiles upon the heads of those who advanced to enter breaches in the walls.

But in time a method was discovered of successfully



TOWER OF  
PHILIP. THE FAIR.



attacking this device of the defending party. Great catapults, the most ancient of military engines, invented away back in the early classic times, were now employed to hurl barrels of burning tar up on to the temporary wooden shelters, which were soon demolished by this means.

For centuries this method of attack and defence



flourished, and it was not until the beginning of the fourteenth century that the machicolated battlements came into existence. From ancient times the old crenelated battlements had served through ages that were engaged in fighting. The ancient Egyptians and Assyrians used them, and it was reserved for the military genius of the Middle Ages to invent the machicolated parapet. This consisted of building out from the main walls of the tower or castle a curtain of masonry, supported by stone

brackets. This gave a thorough protection to the besieged, who could look down through the apertures between the corbels and drop their missiles, molten lead, burning sulphur and melted pitch, on to the heads of their assailants.

The Tower of Philip the Fair is built with a machicolated battlement, and over the small doorway there is an "échauguette," or small projecting tower, which commands the entrance. Even if the besiegers managed to escape the missiles dropped through the floor of the little tower, and forced their way into the porch, their task was not accomplished, for from the roof of the narrow passage leading into the large ground-floor chamber a long chimney runs right up to the top of the tower and down this projectiles could still be dropped.

The tower contains three lofty chambers, one above the other, each of which has a finely vaulted roof, the ribs resting upon fantastically carved corbels. These chambers are in an absolutely perfect state of preservation, a rare thing in a fourteenth-century building in this part of the country. The narrow winding staircase lit by oylets, which betray the thickness of the walls, has at intervals little branch stairways of only a few steps. These give





GATEWAY, TARASCON.



access to small openings into the shaft that runs from the roof of the porch to the roof of the building.

If for any reason the roof had to be abandoned, the besieged could still command the entrance through these apertures. The top chamber in the tower seems to have been used as a prison at some early time, for it is covered with pathetic inscriptions, cut with such care that they could only have been executed by persons upon whose hands the time hung heavily. One cannot know for certain that they are not the work of a besieged garrison, or the guardians of the tower, but the presence of strong iron bars across the outside of the windows, and other evidences, would indicate that prisoners occupied this tower at some time in its history; and one would think that all these precautions to prevent the escape of a prisoner from this lofty room were hardly necessary: unless indeed the prisoner had a rope or was able to construct a makeshift one out of his clothing, he would be very unlikely to run far after he had dropped from this lofty tower on to the rough rocks below.

The stone seat in one of the deep window embrasures in the second chamber has carved upon it, very neatly, the chequered pattern of a chess-board, the alternate

squares being either raised or sunk. A similar "chess-stone" appears upon the floor of one of the chambers in the Fort St. André. One can only imagine them to be the work of prisoners, for, however much time the soldiers of



WINDOW SEAT IN THE  
TOWER OF PHILIP.

the Guard had at their disposal, it is incredible they would have allotted themselves so hard and tedious a task when they could easily obtain a bit of wood to serve their purpose. And yet, who knows? A prolonged siege might have reduced the garrison to its last stick, and the horror of their perilous position may

have driven them to seek any diversion to drive away the contemplation of the fate awaiting them.

The Fort of St. André commands not only the town which nestles around its foundations, but the river and the whole of the western side of Avignon.

When Philip forced the miserable Pope Clement V. to settle in France, he anticipated the necessity of keeping a strict watch on the Papal residences, and although the great Palace which now stands in Avignon was not erected till some years after, Philip had the Fort St. André built to keep a guard. It was probably the proximity of this formidable fortress that caused the succeeding Popes to



FORT. SAINT. ANDRÉ.

take such care with the fortification of their residence. It was from this fortress that the French troops besieged the Papal Palace when Pierre de Luna set up his pretensions and defended it against all comers.

Two great towers form the entrance to the grounds upon which stood the Abbey of St. André. During the troublous times of the sixteenth century these two towers were used as prisons, and the great Hall on the first floor, the Hall of the Chevaliers, served for a recreation-room. The flagstones of this great bare apartment are covered with inscriptions and devices which, although much worn,

show that the prisoners who carved them were educated men of the period. The skill displayed in many of these elaborate devices is all the more remarkable when it is remembered that the only instruments used were the soft pewter spoons the prisoners had for supping soup with. Indications of the prisoners' thoughts are embodied in the stones. A St. George and the Dragon, a Crucifixion, cannon, Maltese crosses, a figure of Justice, a device emblematic of abundance, skulls and crossbones, form some of the subjects upon which the prisoners tried their spoons and skill; whilst one by a member of the "Carbonari" recalls memories of Silvio Pellico and his moving records of a prisoner's life.

The venerable heavy doors that lead into these gloomy chambers groan with age each time they turn upon their well-worn hinges; rusty iron bolts creak out the same melancholy discords that many years ago fell upon strained ears and sinking hearts.

The twin towers of the Fortress of St. André remain a most imposing memorial of fourteenth-century military architecture. Standing on a rock, that at one time was an island of the Rhone, the fort commanded the surrounding country to an extent that made its presence a









menace to the neighbourhood. The walls enclose a site upon which a town nestled in calm security, and near by the Monastery or Abbey of St. André, sheltered further by a great belt of pines, rises upon the site of a still more ancient building now passed out of memory.

Its career has been a chequered one, for it has changed owners with a bewildering frequency. After the Revolution it was turned into a military hospital; later it came into the possession of private persons; and in the second decade of the last century it again became a convent, inhabited by nuns. Now, unoccupied, it awaits some fresh development, but who dare prophesy what destiny has in store for it?

The little town beside it is fast tumbling to decay; its dilapidated walls and roofs straggling in irregular confusion up the rocky hillside. Higher up, on one of the topmost knolls of the enclosure, a small ancient chapel, dedicated to Our Lady of Belvezet, stands erect and stern in its simplicity, forsaken and exposed to the mistral's greatest violence and the sun's fiercest bleaching rays.

The town of Villeneuve, that lies below the fortress, sadly belies its name, for a more concentrated collection of crumbling ruins could hardly be imagined. The

Monastery of the Chartreuse, founded by Innocent VI. in the middle of the fourteenth century (1352), was for more than four hundred years one of the most important and prosperous in Languedoc. The walls enclosing it measure nearly a mile in circumference, and now its ruins form a squalid little town inhabited by over five hundred human beings, to say nothing of the domestic animals.

The walls of its crumbling church are fast disappearing, the roof lets more than daylight in, and what little of it remains affords but a poor shelter for a few rickety, cumbrous, mud-stained carts and piles of faggots stored for winter use.

The Gothic tomb of Innocent VI., the founder and patron of this monastic town (for the Monastery of the Chartreuse was more than a mere cluster of religious buildings), was only removed from this church as lately as 1835, and placed amidst more secure and fitting surroundings, in the Hospice of the town.

This beautiful tomb of Innocent, not unlike that of his predecessor John, in the Cathedral of Avignon, suffered more shameful treatment at the hands of the demoralised mobs of the first Republic. For years it lay neglected, amidst accumulating mounds of degrading filth that

threatened to engulf it ; till during the reign of Louis Philippe, when the fires of the Revolution had died down, attention was directed to the ancient monuments of the country, and amongst other things it was discovered that

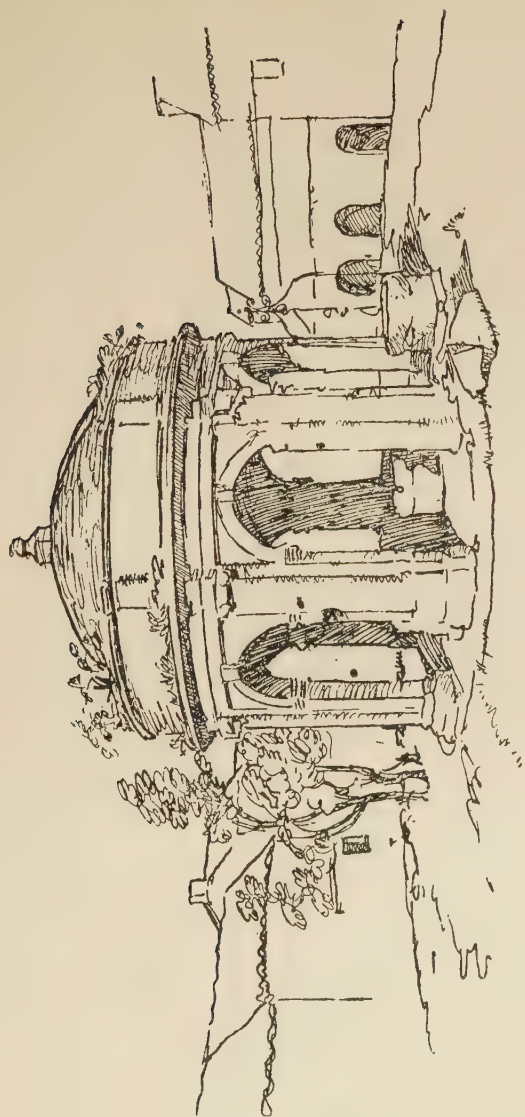


this once beautiful and dignified tomb was being used by some ingenious and impious person as a rabbit hutch. Time's revenges are indeed bitter, but its healing power is none the less merciful, and to-day the tomb receives the homage of pilgrims actuated by more varied motives than those of former ages.

Some idea of the enormous power of Monachism, and the attraction it had for all classes in the Middle Ages, can be derived from the contemplation of even the ruins of these institutions in the Southern countries where they flourished.

At the close of the thirteenth and all through the following century the Monastery and Convent reached the highest developments. The primitive hermits, who lived in bare seclusion, depriving themselves wilfully of all but the essentials of existence, were not only fifteen centuries removed from the powerful and luxurious monks of the Middle Ages, in point of time ; they are for ever unrelated to them in their methods of existence. The gradual stages in the evolution of the monastic idea melt into each other almost imperceptibly. From St. Anthony to the Monastery of Villeneuve is a far cry, and the anchorite of Thebes would have found it difficult to recognise in the monachism of later years the spirit that controlled his life.

Instead of the rough cave of nature's carving, a succession of chapels richly decorated by the hands of accomplished artists, whose talents were controlled by monastic wealth, cloisters with carvings that only practical



THE FOUNTAIN IN -  
THE CLOISTERS OF -  
THE CHARTREUSE -  
VILLENEUVE.





and well-paid sculptors could achieve, galleries, chapter-houses, refectories, gardens, kitchens, stables, wine-cellars, all contributed to the enjoyment of the occupants. The worldly prosperity of the institution continued right down until the Revolution relieved it of its wealth and robbed it of its power. There was no lingering period of decay, but a sudden lightning stroke put an end to the Monastery of the Chartreuse.

Its architecture represents all the styles of four hundred years. Here we see an early Roman-Gothic chapel, on whose walls linger remnants of Italian frescoes, painted when art was breaking away from the archaic tradition of the earlier Christian schools. Classic Renaissance sculpture adorns the fine entrance gateway, a masterpiece of the eighteenth century, the work of de Valfenier. Upon the shield facing the spectator is the inscription : “*Domus Sanctæ Mariæ. Vallis Benedictiones.*”

All through the strange winding lanes, that once were cloisters and vaulted passages, incongruous squalid makeshift hovels mingle and jostle with the ancient buildings. In the centre of one of the cloisters there stands unfinished, but isolated, a classic rotunda that once sheltered a fountain, one of the latest additions to the monastery

when the end came. At the beginning of the eighteenth century buildings foreign to the character of the place grew up in the cloisters that surround this dignified rotunda, but the intervening space has fortunately been spared to give, as it were, a breathing space to one of the best preserved monuments in the ruined abbey.

## TARASCON



### III

#### TARASCON

DAUDET has left on record the feelings of embarrassment that overcame him whenever he had to pass the little town of Tarascon. From the moment when the great white towers of the Château René burst upon his view until it was left behind he confesses to feeling ill at ease. He had made the name of the sleepy Provençal town almost as famous in the nineteenth century as it had been in the fifteenth, and yet its natives were ungrateful and in no way pleased with the new celebrity that had been thrust upon them.

Tartarin and Tarascon were, however, both pseudonyms; but with the almost comic seriousness that is characteristic of the Provençal, the inhabitants of the little town felt convinced that the author was holding them up to ridicule. The real scene of the cap-shooting parties that Daudet had in view, when he penned the delightful exploits of the famous Tartarin, lies about fifteen miles on the other

side of the Rhone. "Tarascon," with its fine sonorous rolling sound, appealed to the ear of the author, who little thought that his choice of it as a part title for his work would draw down upon his head the execrations of a town. And they put their resentment into deeds too, for the book was banned and never could be bought in the place. Time works wonders: the resentment is now forgotten, and the adventures of the famous hero are pushed under the nose of every passing stranger who puts foot into Tarascon.

Tarascon is a junction on the Paris-Lyons and Mediterranean system, and its station is a busy hive of bustling noisy humanity whenever a train arrives or departs. Few of the many thousands of passengers who pass through the junction make any stay in the town, although it is well worthy of a visit. The two "monuments," as they are called, of the town are the Château René and the Church of St. Martha. These alone are more than worth the time taken to examine them, and the town itself is picturesque enough to warrant an inspection by the casual passer-by and a more prolonged stay by the lover of out-of-the-way corners.

A wide boulevard, the Avenue de la République (nearly

every little town in Provence has its "Avenue de la République"), planted with four rows of great plane trees, leads from the station to the centre of this town of



some nine or ten thousand inhabitants. Small and large cafés, with little and big forecourts framed in front of them by shrubs growing out of old wine casks which are



painted a vivid green colour, are the most distinguishing features of this boulevard.

It is not difficult to discover the "Château" from any part of the town, for its great walls tower far above the loftiest buildings. It is one of the best preserved fortresses of the fourteenth to the fifteenth century in Provence, and the walls reflect as brilliantly as ever the dazzling sunlight. Despite their age, they remain fresh and unstained by dirt, an eloquent tribute to the purity of the Provençal atmosphere. Built upon rocks that rise abruptly from the waters of the Rhone, it was in days gone by surrounded entirely by the river, a bridge of three arches giving access from the landward side across the moat. The moat is now dry, for the ends of it, which were formerly connected with the river, are closed, one by the construction of the abattoirs and the other by a great stone wall which has been built across, to keep the waters out. A more imposing mediæval castle could hardly be imagined, nor one more typical of the fourteenth century.

King René, the merry monarch of the land of the Troubadours, had rather an eventful life. He inherited through his father, Duke Louis II. of Anjou, the title of King of Naples, and from 1434 onwards was involved

in a complication of troubles and wars in endeavouring to gain that kingdom, as well as those of Sicily and



Jerusalem. When luck went against him and he was imprisoned by Philip of Burgundy, who was the supporter

of the claims of Count Vandemont, he provisionally made over to his wife, the Duchess Isabella, all his rights, and she became Regent of Naples, Sicily, Anjou, Provence, etc. René managed at last to ransom himself from his prison, and made a final attempt to possess himself of Naples. The Duke Alphonse of Aragon was, however, too strong for him, and he was reluctantly forced to retire to Provence. His daughter, Margaret, married Henry VI. of England, and was as unfortunate as her father in her royal career. Poor old René was the possessor of many empty titles. He was Duke of Lorraine, King of Naples, King of Sicily and of Jerusalem, but with them all he never had much power, nor was possessed of riches commensurate with his high rank. Shakespeare in *Henry VI.*, makes Gloster say of him :

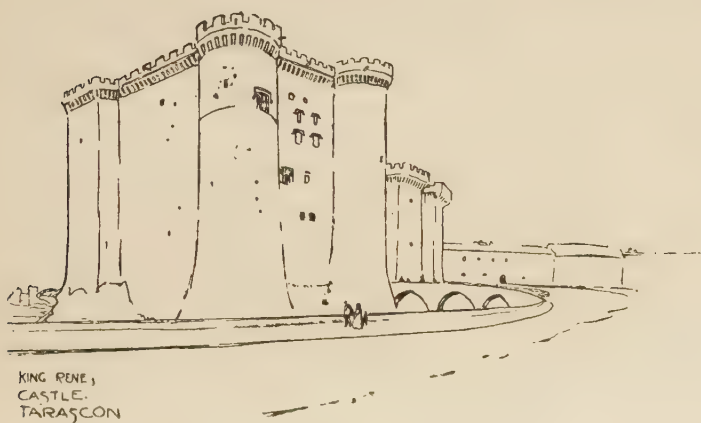
" Unto the poor King Regnier, whose large style  
Agrees not with the leanness of his purse,"

and further makes York refer to :

" The type of King of Naples of both the Sicils and Jerusalem.  
Yet not so wealthy as an English yeoman."

Of all the kingdoms to which he claimed the title, none

were actually in his possession except the fair country of Provence. He was a good-natured, easy-going old monarch ; gay, and in spite of all the troubles that overtook him, light-hearted. His daughter's marriage with the King of Engand was unfortunate for all parties concerned, and instead of René benefiting by the splendid



alliance, the poor old King had frequently to dip his hand deep into his purse to ransom his unlucky daughter. The court of this old Bohemian was conducted on free and easy lines ; wandering minstrels and errant knights finding hearty welcome from the King, whose fame was naturally spread far and wide by those gentry. It was only in the

last years of René's reign that he was able to reside much at his castles of Aix, Tarascon and Les Baux—a short period of calm after a stormy life.

He practised the arts of poetry, painting and music, and the surest passport any knight or troubadour could have to his good will and patronage was to be proficient in either of these accomplishments. A good listener might also come in for a share of his smiles, for he was notoriously fond of singing and reciting his own ballads and verses, or superintending some pageant or display. His poetic works were published in four volumes during the last century, but they have never attained any great celebrity.

Of all his castles, Tarascon is the only one standing in anything like its original condition. As one looks up at the great round towers that swell out at the two corners of the main building (on the landward side), one realises what a sense of security its inmates must have indulged in, when besieged; and how impotent the attacking party must have felt. The riverward towers are square, as are the two smaller towers on the north-east side. There is a girdle of slightly projecting stone-work upon one of the towers, about three-quarters of the way up,

that conveys very vividly to the eye its great circumference.

Just past the south corner of this vast fortress, the Château de Montmorency rises on the other side of the river. In the clear air its outlines are sharp and well defined, and this distant toylike building helps to accentuate the size of the Château, near at hand. The outer windows on the great wall are grilled over with strong iron bars, for the Château is now a prison. These windows have dripstones over them, the carved ends of which are the only ornamentation on the great bare face of the building. For the rest, the corbels that support the machicolated battlements give a play of light and shade that, though simple, has a very rich effect, when contrasted with the great plain spaces below. The battlements, with their embrasures and oylets, form a crown of great dignity to the whole building, and it is in such fine condition (doubtless carefully restored) that one has no difficulty in picturing the rich spectacle that must have been presented by a cavalcade of brightly habited knights and ladies with their attendants issuing forth on a sunny morning to fly their falcons or to attend some fête at a neighbouring castle. No finer background for their



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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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gorgeous costumes could be conceived than these plain creamy walls, which the rounded towers at each corner save from monotony.

From the river the Castle does not present so bold an appearance, owing to the absence of rounded towers. At a little distance, when its size is not so apparent, it looks almost Greek in its restraint and refinement ; the row of brackets supporting the overhanging battlements suggesting a series of dentils under an irregular entablature.

The inside of the Castle is well worth examination, but the prison authorities are a little particular whom they admit, and the visitor has to be conducted through the great building by a jailer, who, armed with great bunches of mediæval keys, unbolts ancient doors on creaking hinges, and bolts them just as carefully after. The internal arrangements of a fourteenth-to-fifteenth-century castle are simple, if massive, and hardly any alteration has been necessary to convert it into a prison. Very little has been changed since the good old King's time. The Chapel has only had a movable wooden partition placed down the centre of it, to separate the prisoners who have been condemned from those awaiting trial, when they



attend "the service." The cells for solitary confinement, with their elaborate blacksmith-wrought fastenings, would defy the ingenuity of any "Jack Sheppard" seeking to escape.

There is not much carving or sculptured work in the Castle. It has been sparingly used, except in the porch of the Chapel, which is in fine ogival style with delicately



KING RENE'S CASTLE

carved archivolt. The principal chamber of the King is a noble apartment, in which the ceiling is, or rather was, a feature. It is heavily timbered, and although the panels have been removed to enrich some museum or private collection, sufficient remains to give an idea of the importance of this apartment. The embrasures of the windows are of the depth of the wall—that is, about twelve feet—and they form small chambers, around which are great stone slabs, that were used as seats.

Opening off the Royal Apartment is the Salle du Garde. From this room a door formerly opened into a passage that communicated with galleries extending all over the building. On the other side of the circular staircase, that leads up to the King's apartment, there is a sexagonal chamber with a timbered panelled roof. This was occupied by the ladies-in-waiting on the Queen, whose apartment, immediately above it, had a fine vaulted roof. In such wonderful preservation are these apartments of five hundred years ago that they want but tapestries and furniture to be as habitable as ever they were. One can easily, in imagination, fill these chambers with the laughing maids of honour, bending over their tambours and tapestry work, or poring over some book with its delicately painted pages in which the romances of the Troubadours were set forth—one reading aloud for the benefit of the others some long narration of days gone by: perchance the very popular story, rhymed in true Troubadour fashion, about the inmates of the Castle of Beaucaire, that from the windows of the King's and the Ladies' apartment could be seen so distinctly in the sunlight.

This story of Aucassin and Nicolète has been translated

from the Provençal language into English by Andrew Lang. It relates how the Count of Valence was at war with the Count of Beaucaire, and was always outside the walls of his castle, to the great annoyance of everybody. The Count of Beaucaire was old and frail, and possessed



of only one son, his hope and pride. This youth, Aucassin by name, was deeply in love with a dark-eyed maid, a slave girl, Nicolète, that a captain in the town of Beaucaire had purchased from the Saracens in Carthage, and had adopted. The old Count, furious at the thought of his only son making such a *mésalliance* as to marry a Saracen slave girl, ordered the young man to go out and

fight against the enemy of their house and to lead the retainers of the family of Beaucaire on to victory. At the same time the Count prevailed upon Nicolète's owner to have her put in seclusion, out of reach of Master Aucassin.

Whilst the youth is wringing his hands in despair, the city is besieged by the Count Valence, and the old Count of Beaucaire upbraids his son for his inactivity. Then Aucassin urges his suit to his father; but the old man will not give way, and only consents to allow the lovers an interview if Aucassin proves his mettle in the battle that is raging around them. The bold youth arms himself and rides out of the castle, and in an absent-minded mood goes right into the arms of the enemy. When he does realise his position and comes to himself he does doughty deeds, in his turn taking Count Valence captive, and, returning with him to the besieged castle, demands that his father should keep his engagement and grant him the promised interview with his lady-love. The old man refuses, and Aucassin is so overcome with rage that he releases his prisoner—an act for which his father puts him in close confinement.

Time passes, Nicolète escapes from her prison and goes

amissing. Count Beaucaire, thinking that all danger to his son is now over, releases him from prison. One day Aucassin comes across Nicolète in a wood where she has been hiding, and together they go in a boat and make their escape down the river, only to be washed out to sea and captured by pirates. Their troubles are increased by their being separated. Aucassin is ransomed by his father, and Nicolète is sold to the Saracens. You would think that this was the end of her tale. No ; she escapes disguised and finds her way back to fair Provence, where she makes a living by singing ballads up and down the country, eventually arriving at Beaucaire, where Aucassin is now Count in his father's stead. Of course he discovers his long-lost lady-love, and the story ends, as all good stories should, with the hero and heroine living happily ever after.

From the extensive roof of the Château a great panorama lies before the spectator. The Rhone for many a mile away to the south glistens in the sunlight until it is lost to view near the rising ground upon which with good glasses the Arena at Arles can be discerned. To the north the two lofty towers of Château Renard rise up, whilst in the far, faint dis-

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROvence

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tance the snow-capped peak of Mont Ventoux floats in the haze.

Provence is well supplied with lofty points of vantage, from which extensive prospects are before the spectator, and enable him to understand somewhat why Provence was chosen as a home for chivalry and a garden for romance. Castles rise up on nearly every point of vantage. Great cypress-trees shelter the low-lying fields. Farmhouses nestle in the protection of rising ground, upon which they would not, like the great stern castles and watch-towers, be able to retain a foothold when the mistral sweeps the heights. For the elements are at their strongest in Provence. The sun shines brightly and burns fiercely, the winds blow violently and chillingly, and the rains fall in terrible earnest in "this land of plenty."

Greek, Roman, and Gaul have all fought for existence on nearly every foot of its great plains and scattered heights, and travellers from distant lands have often fallen a prey to the dangers that such a country could so easily harbour.

All around are castles that have stood many a siege when occupied by warriors whose history was one long





ST. MARTHA'S.  
TARASCON.





record of fights against Saracens and infidels abroad, and feudal chiefs at home.

High up on the walls of the Castle of Tarascon one can see evidences of the ordinances of later times. The end of the eighteenth century has left its mark here as on most of the strongholds and buildings in Provence.

The only other important building in Tarascon is the Church of St. Martha ; but it is the most significant that the little town possesses, for it perpetuates the legend which gives the town its name.

The story of St. Martha and her victory over the devastating terror of the country-side, "The Tarasc," is but a variation of the familiar St. George and the Dragon legend which embodies the pietistic faith in the overthrow of evil by good. This legend of St. Martha, along with that of the "Stes. Maries," belongs exclusively to Provence, and it permeates the whole religious tradition of the delta of the Rhone. The story or legend runs that, after the crucifixion of Christ, the holy women who had remained faithful to their Lord, Mary Magdalen, Mary the mother of James, Mary Salome, Martha with Sara, their black servant and Lazarus, were put in a boat by the Jews and sent out to sea. After an adventurous voyage of nearly

two months, they landed on the extreme west point of the Camargue in a little village that was inhabited by some poor Phocean fisherfolk. The legends vary as to the subsequent routes taken by the illustrious voyagers, but they seem all to agree that Martha found her way to Tarascon; Mary Magdalen to St. Baume, not far from Marseilles, where her bones are believed to be under the Chapel of the Grotto; St. Lazarus accompanied her to Marseilles, where the legend connecting him with that city is still held in esteem by the pious.

Early in the fifteenth century, King René, who had an excellent taste for romantic legends, had a vision in which the holy women of "Stes. Maries" appeared to him and revealed the spot where their mortal remains were lying neglected. The sentimental King sought them and had them placed in the church, which he rebuilt on the spot where they first landed, and altered the name of the church from "Our Lady of the Sea" to "Les Maries." Up to this time the little church of the tenth century, at this spot, went by the name of "St. Mary of the Boats," or "St. Mary of the Sea."

This name was probably but the Christian of an older Pagan name, given to the church or temple that stood on



THE POSTERN, LES BAUX



its site, a name likely enough derived from the fame of the Syrian prophetess Martha, who accompanied Marius on his expedition into Gaul, a hundred years before the Christian era. And presumably there existed an earlier temple still upon this lonely swamp, a temple to some deity or goddess whose protective care the earliest Phoceans sought to procure by votive offerings. However this may be, René decided that the "Stes. Maries" were Mary, the mother of James, Mary Salome, and Sara, the black servant, who had remained in the little seaside village converting the inhabitants to the Christian faith.

Thus the great patron of romantic story inaugurated a legend that has persevered until to-day, for pilgrims from all parts still pay visits to "Les Maries" by the sea, to receive benefits and healing from the relics of the two Maries which are exhibited annually, whilst the remains of the black servant, Sara, strangely enough exact and receive homage of the gipsies from Bohemia.

St. Martha, who went first, on leaving her fellow-voyagers, to Aix, received there a deputation from a neighbouring place, Tarascon, which unfolded to her their sad plight. A great monster was ravaging their countryside, and their only hope was to get some one endowed

with miraculous power to come to their assistance. The good Saint immediately set out for the terror-stricken town, where she received a great ovation from the assembled inhabitants. Without delay, armed with nothing but a small wooden cross, she sought the monster in the woods near by, and on finding it, held up the sacred emblem in front of it. The monster's bellows ceased at once, for the terror lay dead at her feet, its great jaws red with the blood of its last victim. St. Martha returned to the village and exhibited to the grateful populace the monster tied to her girdle.

King René, fond, as is well known, of pageants, processions, and fêtes, was the founder of the annual festival of the "Tarasque," which was celebrated until quite recently in the month of June. A great pantomime monster was carried round the streets by sixteen men concealed in its body. It was led by a village beauty dressed in imitation of the Saint. The head of the creature had jaws that were movable, and they could be worked so as to grip any venturesome person who came close enough. When too hotly assailed by the townsfolk, fireworks were discharged from the eyes and different parts of the great canvas body. The old traditional



"Tarasque" of great magnificence, which cost nearly £1,000, was, however, destroyed at the time of the Revolution by the Arlesiens, and was replaced shortly afterwards by the less imposing contrivance of to-day. The procession or fête was of a semi-religious character, and this, together with the rough practical jokes and



horse-play that the people indulged in, led to its being prohibited by the Government in 1904.

The Church of St. Martha, as might be expected, is full of references both in stone and canvas to the Lady. The Church itself is, like the south porch, in the Romanesque Gothic style. Here are paintings by Vien, the eighteenth-century painter who was the master of David. His

pictures are in a classic style which he lived to see more popular than it was when he introduced it first, after his long residence in Rome. They make no great appeal to the tastes of this century, for the severe and academical style of them is apt to leave the spectator cold and unsympathetic. The subjects are all relative to the religious legends of Provence: "The Visit of Christ to St. Martha," "The Raising of Lazarus," "The Embarkation of St. Martha," "The Landing of Martha at Marseilles," "St. Martha preaching the Gospel at Tarascon," and "The Death of St. Martha."

The pictures by Parrocel are not so interesting either from the point of view of the artist or the seeker after legendary lore.

One of Mignard's two canvases represents St. Martha attending on our Saviour. It is significant of the high repute in which the religious legends of Provence were held, and the wealth of the Church at the period, that such popular painters of the eighteenth century could be commissioned to execute pictures recording them.

There is a small picture by Vanloo, "The Death of St. Francis d'Assisi," in one of the side-chapels; a very beautiful rendering of a religious subject that is worth,





from an artist's standpoint, miles of the larger canvases that cover the main walls. An old altar-piece in another of the shallow side-chapels is a fine piece of sixteenth-century decorative painting.

Enclosed in a cheap-looking painted cupboard that stands in the sacristy is the reliquary that holds a "veritable" portion of St. Martha's skull. This reliquary is not ancient, but is a reproduction of an original that was presented to the Church by Louis XI. in 1478, and which, in the unhappy starvation times of the great Revolution, was sent to the Genoese merchants by the revolutionaries in exchange for wheat to the value of £4,000. It was a great loss to the Church in more ways than one, for in the head of the bust were placed the frontal bones of the patron Saint of Tarascon. This bust was of solid gold, and round it were beautiful little enamels which pictured the life of St. Martha; an exquisite statue of King Louis XI. represented him kneeling in adoration at the base of the bust. The reproduction is in gilt, and contains a portion of the base of the Saint's skull tied with a piece of pink ribbon. The tomb in the crypt had of course to be opened to obtain these. Beautiful as the reproduction is, and veritable as is the relic it contains,

it is doubtful if the pious Tarasconaises are reconciled to the loss of the most precious ornaments that the town possessed.

Down in the dark, damp crypt of the Church, lit only by the entrance, lies a tomb of real dignity and beauty. This crypt is a part of the older church of the twelfth century, and is without any particular grace or beauty, acting as a foil to the monument it enshrines.

This representation in marble of the entombment of St. Martha is of real merit. The recumbent figure of the Saint lies in a peaceful repose that is nobly expressed. A figure of Christ supports the head, and one of St. Fronton the feet. The anachronism of associating St. Fronton, who was a Bishop of Périgueux in the fourth century, with an event that presumably took place in the first, does not seem to have troubled the author of this tomb. But in a land of Romance one should close one's eyes to such unromantic things as dates, and accept without question the stories woven by a clergy that seem to have been largely endowed by the same spirit that inspired the Troubadours of their sunny land.

## LES BAUX





## IV

### LES BAUX

THE little chain of rugged hills with fantastic contours, which breaks away from the great Alpine range and juts into the peaceful valley of the Rhone, is called "Les Alpilles," or little Alps. On the south side of this small mountain chain, upon cliffs that stand almost isolated from the main group, lie the ruins of the ancient Provençal town of Les Baux.

The approach to this extraordinary place from over the mountain chain is full of interest and surprises, if one starts out from St. Remy, which lies well over to the north. The ascent by the winding road that curves and twists round the great hills is a fitting preparation for the scenery that lies to the south, for the distant hilltops are crowned with great rocks, carved and chiselled by nature into such shapes that the eye continually mistakes them for buildings erected by the hands of men.

The tall cypress-trees that in the plains spire up into

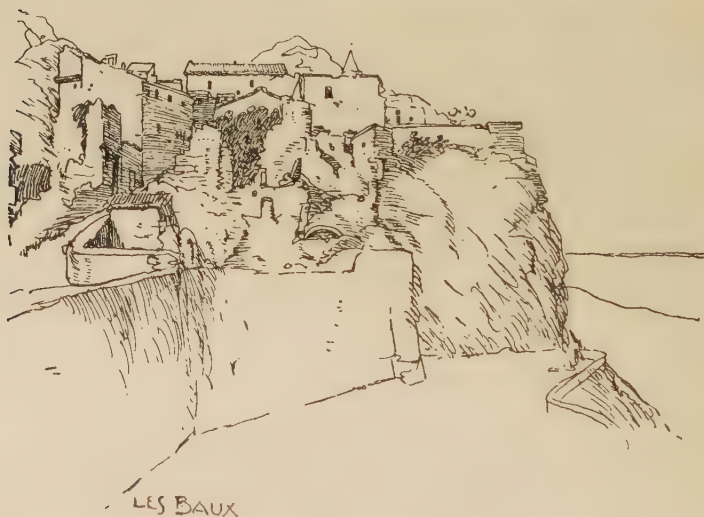
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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROvence

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the sky disappear as one ascends, and few shrubs or trees clothe the bald hillside. Wild thyme and lavender betray their presence by the fragrance of their perfume. Rabbits burrow amongst the undergrowth ; hawks hover high overhead, and with keen, penetrating vision sweep the rugged



landscape in search of prey. Few other signs of life disturb the quiet of the lonely hills.

From the crest of the chain, just before the descent into the great plains of La Crau, a weird scene breaks upon the eye. A valley of rocks, so fantastic, so unearthly, that one can easily credit the Provençal poet

Mistral's belief that it was here that Dante got the inspiration for his graphic description of the topography of the infernal regions. It is a valley of death, of ghosts of skeletons, rocks naked and gaunt, altogether baffling description.

As the limestone of which these rocks are composed



is admirable for building purposes, quarrymen have been at work upon the scene, and the great square doorways, or openings, cut into the grotesque formless masses accentuate the unreality of this spot. One could imagine it inhabited by strange monsters of human shape bereft of man's feelings and emotions. But the wild mysterious

grandeur of the valley constitutes only half the astoundingness of the place. For on a great precipitous rock, at the end of it, stands the town of Les Baux, half-built, half-excavated, more than half-ruined, a strange confusion of man's and nature's architecture. Above the town, which is carved and built upon a plateau half-way up this mountain rock, a castle rears its ruined towers.

This gaunt fortress looks right over the great, flat plain of La Crau to the distant blue waters of the Mediterranean, over to the lands about fifty miles distant upon which one of the world's most decisive battles was fought, when Marius with his legions laid 200,000 Ambrones dead upon the field.

The great plateau of La Crau has undergone much change since Roman times. In the fifteenth century a canal was dug across its arid surface, and lands that were once marshy swamps and barren stony ground are gradually yielding to the persuasive hand of the agriculturist, and producing rich harvests of grapes and olives, mulberries, and almonds.

In the Middle Ages this stronghold of Les Baux was the capital of one of the most powerful lordships in the whole county of Provence, and the independent sovereignty of

its rulers was unquestioned by neighbouring and distant nobles alike. It was an important and celebrated town, its name familiar wherever the minstrel sang his song or the troubadour his lay. Its population mustered more than four thousand strong ; but that was long ago, in the days when a highway connected it with Orgon and Arles. Year by year, ever since this was abandoned, the town's prosperity has declined ; its churches, convents, and castle have lost heart, for their inhabitants have fled. The wind howls through its abandoned ramparts, and the sun's rays penetrate into once gloomy dungeons. Yesterday four hundred souls possessed the town ; to-day there are scarce a hundred who find shelter among its ruins ; to-morrow Nature will again take possession, and man's architectural efforts will have crumbled away.

Throughout all the many changes that Provence has experienced in its rulers, the ancient family of Des Baux clung tenaciously to their rock fortress, and their name was held in high esteem. Their coat of arms, a star with sixteen rays, can still be seen along with several others within the ruined Chapel of St. Claude. It occurs also in other parts of Provence, and typifies the proud claim of the Des Baux to a direct descent from one of the Kings

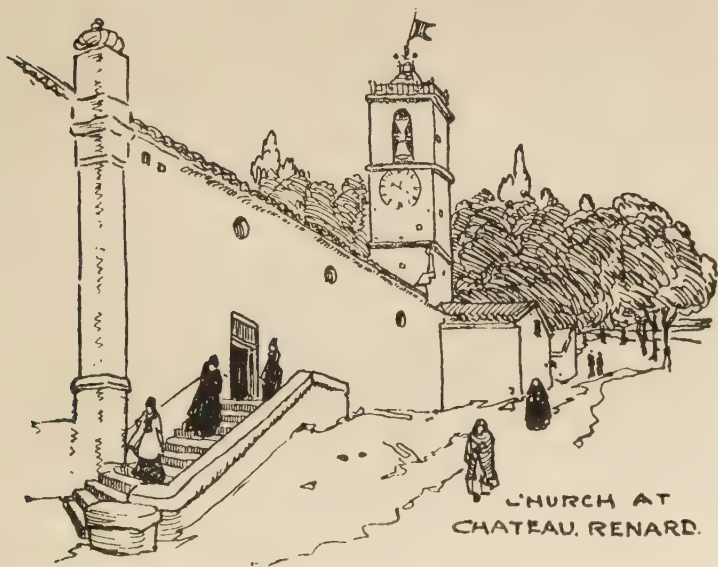
who, guided by a star, came from the East to lay rich gifts before the Infant Christ lying in the manger at Bethlehem. The descendants of the Oriental King, proud of their origin, added to their titles of Princes of Baux those of Princes of Orange, Viscounts of Marseilles, Counts of Provence, Kings of Arles and Vienne, Seneschals of Piedmont, Podestas of Milan, Counts of Milan, along with many others.

To follow the fortunes of the Des Baux family, the feudal chiefs of the surrounding country, is to dip deep into the history of Provence, for their names are constantly cropping up over divisions of land and inheritance by marriage with neighbouring and distant families. Suffice it to say that from the time of Count Leibulfe, who founded the house and lived probably in the eighth century, to that of Honoré Camille de Grimaldi, from whom the marquisate of Baux was taken by force during the Revolution, its princes have been related to nearly every great family in Europe. The Château, which has resisted many a siege, is of almost monolithic construction ; its ramparts, towers, staircases, banqueting halls carved out of the rocks. The builders have made use of the natural foundations, and the result of the natural and artificial



construction is one of the most fantastic castles that ever existed.

When René succeeded to the Barony of Baux the town was in a thriving condition, and in 1444 he set about



putting the castle, much battered by successive sieges, into repair, restoring the ramparts and towers; and, internally furnishing it with all the resources the period could command, made it over to his second wife Jean de Laval for her lifetime. Old King René, artist, poet, and musician, found in Baux an ideal spot after his own heart.

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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For nearly three centuries Baux had been a favourite rallying-place for the Troubadours and the ancient "Court of Love."

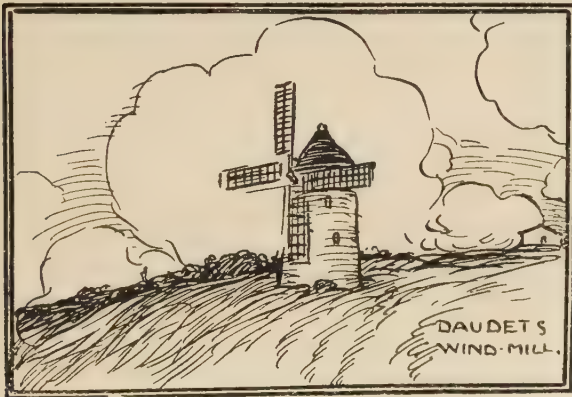
The records of the numerous wars and forays in which the Lords of Baux and their retainers were engaged have not, however, aroused the curious interest of later times so much as have the town's romantic associations with the literature of the dark ages, written in the dialect of the Langue d'Oc, better known as Provençal.

This language, which still lingers in the South of France, arose gradually out of the corrupted Roman dialects of the first centuries, throughout the colonies occupied by the conquering Empire of the West. The particular variety of dialect known as Provençal gained a wider celebrity than that spoken in Iberia, or in the districts north of the Loire. It was developed from the old Romance language, and about the eleventh or twelfth century was extensively in vogue among the cultured classes throughout Europe.

A crop of poets sprang up in amazing profusion in the valley of the Rhone, and all who had pretensions to learning and refinement wrote in the language of Romance until well on into the fifteenth century, when a decay

set in and other languages developed into more permanent and literary forms. The Provençal language, with its smooth and pleasant sounds, seemed eminently adapted to the feelings and voluptuous thoughts of a people who delighted in song, music, and the dance.

The Troubadours, or finders (inventors), sprang from



all classes of the people, and the admiration which was accorded their productions, combined with the flattery and praise bestowed upon the authors, tended to awaken latent vanity and draw thousands into the field of poetry. Princes and Knights, the aristocracy of the country, entered into this domain; and lays, thousands of verses long, recounted the adventures of the Brave Knights who

fought for the Cross, and incidentally for themselves, against Saracens and Turks. The lack of any other literature, unless among a few obscure monastic students, gave a great impetus to these lays, written by the Troubadours and sung sometimes by themselves, but more often by the strolling minstrel who learnt by heart the long-winded romances.

Of a lower order were the Jongleurs, who entertained the Lords and Ladies in their great halls in winter, and in the courts and gardens in the summer months. They were tumblers and acrobats, who practised every kind of antic and contortion to amuse audiences who knew neither theatre nor music-hall.

An old romance relates how one of these Jongleurs, fallen upon evil days, sought refuge in a monastery, where he assumed the cowl. Distressed at his inability to render the Holy Virgin sacred service, and worried lest this might be discovered by the inmates of the convent and lead to his dismissal, at last, in all humility, he betook himself into a vault at the hour when the monks were engaged in their devotions. Here, in front of the statue of the Blessed Virgin, divesting himself of hooded gown, he went through a series of



A STREET IN  
CHATEAU. RENARD.



antics and contortions with such determination and fanatic zeal, that at last he fell in a fainting condition upon the hard cold floor. When he recovered, he rejoined the brethren in the refectory and partook of food, which he ate tremblingly and with sore misgivings. The poor tumbler continued his eccentric devotions at matins and vespers daily, always in fear that the Abbot should discover his strange worship and insist upon some more becoming form of service beyond his power to render. The Abbot and brothers, anxious to know the "why and wherefore" of the tumbler's daily visit to the lonely crypt, concealed themselves to witness his devotions. The astonishment they felt on observing his extraordinary method of doing homage to the Queen of Heaven was further increased when they beheld the glorious Lady, crowned and clothed in shining raiment, accompanied by the angelic hosts, descend from the roof and minister with loving care to the unconscious acrobat. The unearthly visitors vanished when the exhausted tumbler revived, and he returned to his cell, equally unconscious of the heavenly ministrations and the espionage of his brethren. The story goes on to relate, in the sequel, how the Abbot honoured the tumbler ever



after, admitted him as a perpetual brother to the monastery, recognised the efficacy of his worship, and pointed out to those whose sense of religious propriety was shocked when the story of the tumbler's carryings on leaked out, that the true spirit of religious service was of more account than its method.

This romance throws a little ray of light on some aspects of life in the Middle Ages, but there are many more, less elevated in sentiment, which depict the curious conception of chivalry, religion, superstition, and love common at a period when society was emerging from the darkest age that Europe has experienced since the advent of civilisation.

The literature and traditions of the Troubadours is extensive, and the lives of nearly one hundred and fifty of them have been written. Nearly every king and great prince in the Middle Ages had a troubadour attached to his court. Richard Cœur de Lion, who had pretensions to poetry himself, patronised and encouraged some of the most famous of the fraternity, such as Arnaud, Daniel, Vidal, and Flouquet of Marseilles. The Princes of Baux were most enthusiastic patrons of the poetic brotherhood, the tourney, the joust, and that most curious pastime of the age, the "Court of Love."

These parliaments of Love, which were the outcome of the cult of gallantry, flourished in Provence, and par-



THE PAVILION OF  
QUEEN JEANNE  
LES BAUX

ticularly in the romantic town of Les Baux. The walled "Court of Queen Jeanne," as it is called, can still be seen

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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in the valley, and a very beautiful little pavilion of Renaissance architecture adorns the spot. In this tribunal women were the only judges and reigned supreme. Troubadours came from all parts to extol the beauty of their mistresses, and put nice points relating to the etiquette of gallantry before the Court. Contesting parties argued out these impossible subtleties with grave seriousness, and the pedantic ingenuity of the Council and Court was exercised to determine imaginary cases, in which bright glances, stolen kisses, and furtive hand-squeezings constituted the most important evidence.

Another part of the diversion offered at these gatherings was the recital by the princely troubadours of their songs, to the accompaniment of the viol and guitar, played by themselves or by the jongleurs. It was at this court that Guillaume de Cabestan sang the praises of the Princess Bérengère, wife of Lord des Baux, and those of her sister-in-law, Tricline Carbonnelle. These songs are largely concerned with the adventures of princes and knights in the domains of Love and War, and descriptions and histories of violent passions, to which the warm-blooded peoples of the South were peculiarly subject. So obsessed were these early poets with the fascination

of the greater passions that one can hardly wonder at some of the fantastic turns their songs and stories took. Most of them have failed to stand the test of time ; their affectations and pedantic unreality failing utterly to reflect natural feelings and spontaneous emotions.

The strange relationship that grew up between the troubadours and the great ladies to whom they offered their platonic admiration and regard, is sufficient to brand many of the lays with the stamp of insincerity. Each troubadour was, by a sort of unwritten code, bound to choose some lady-love ; it did not matter if she were married—indeed, she generally was—and to this divinity, were she fair, fat, or ugly, he offered lays and songs that praised her beauty in extravagant terms.

As the troubadour was generally dependent on the patronage of the great for his bread, it was common to select the wife of his patron for this high honour. Doubtless if the troubadour were of humble or lowly origin, the difference of his estate from that of the object of his poetic worship would prevent any undue familiarity being encouraged, although many of the earlier love-songs of the troubadours affect a deep and " love-at-a-distance " kind of worship of the fair divinity. There are many

stories told by the troubadours themselves that unblushingly proclaim that the relationships existing between worshipper and worshipped were such as to disturb domestic peace ; but when outraged husbands wreaked their just wrath upon these sighing swains, the sympathy of the narrator of the story is invariably on the side of the author of the trouble.

One of the best known of these tales is as follows : Guillaume de Cabestan, before mentioned, made love in troubadour fashion to the wife of Raymond de Seillans. Raymond, doubtless, saw more in the attachment than he thought consistent with his honour, and to revenge himself upon the guilty lovers, he slew the poet, tore out his heart and had it cooked and served up for dinner. After his unsuspecting spouse had eaten of the dish, and he had made known to her the loathsome nature of her repast, the lady lost her reason and threw herself from a window on to the rocks below.

The Castle of Baux is now a crumbling mass of ruins. Every year sees additions to the collection of fallen boulders that lie like tumbled giants on the sloping terrace below.

The only chapel still in use, the best-preserved building

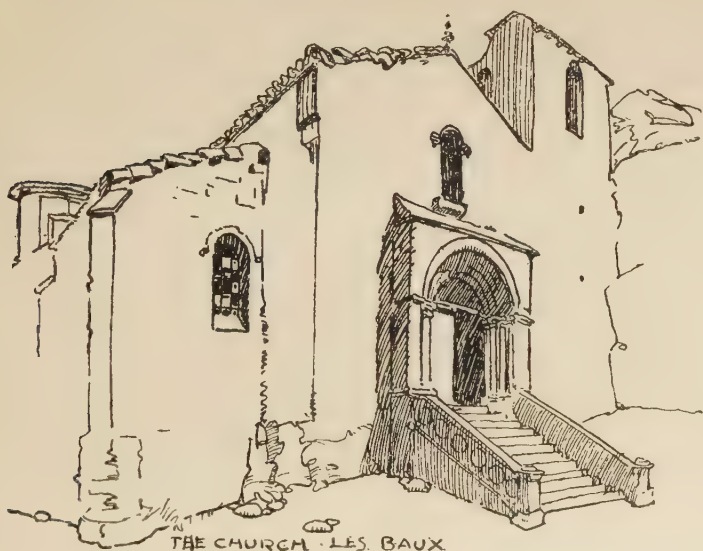


MONTMAJOUR.





in the dismantled town, is dedicated to St. Vincent, the patron saint of Les Baux. It has a central nave flanked by two side aisles of unequal proportions and different dates, and of these the more ancient, to the right of the



entrance, has little side chapels, cut out of the rock which forms the south side of the edifice.

Towards the end of the last century, for unexplained reasons, excavations were made in the crypt of the church, and several of the heavy slabs of stone that covered tombs were raised. Bodies, clad in rich garments, in a

perfect state of preservation, were discovered, which, however, crumbled away on being handled and exposed to the air. All that remained were the long tresses of golden hair that belonged to a young girl, supposed to have been one of the princesses of Baux, whose wonderful beauty had long ago incited the troubadours to eulogy.

The value of this find was quickly appreciated by the keeper of the languishing little hotel that stands in the "Place Fortin." He obtained possession of the "Golden Tresses," and, with an eye to business, altered the name of his hostelry to "A la Chevelure d'Or," and exhibited the relic to his customers. After this curious relic was recovered by Mistral and lodged in the Museum which he founded in Arles, the sign of the hotel was changed to "The Hôtel Monaco," a name obviously suggested by the connection of the town with the Grimaldi family, who were presented with the marquise of Les Baux by Louis XIII. in 1642. But change and decay is the keynote of Les Baux; the name has again altered with the declining fortunes of the town, and, as if in mockery of the destitution and poverty that lie around it on all sides, the sign upon the weather-beaten walls of the neglected hotel reads "Hôtel de MONTE-CARLO."

An old man upon whose hatband the word "Guide" is with difficulty discerned, one or two stray hungry-



looking dogs, a few wild-looking fowls, the Hôtel Propriétaire, and innumerable flies constitute the crowd who

forgather daily in the most popular resort of the town. The arrival of a traveller awakens but mild excitement in Les Baux. Two human hearts may beat a little quicker in the hopes of gain. The dogs sniff round the stranger with bewildered curiosity, and the flies buzz gleefully on discovering a new victim to torment. The guide (and a guide who knows the place is necessary to the stranger), bent with age, is quite in harmony with the surroundings. With a pathetic humour he leads his clients up the "Grande Rue," and tells them, with a smile, that it is not like the "Cannebière" at Marseilles, for the only café in Les Baux is the Hôtel de Monte-Carlo.

At every step he points to some ruined doorway with fine carving of the seventeenth century ; windows with beautifully moulded mullions and inscriptions ; houses once inhabited by noble families whose fame still survives. At every turning, in front of every doorway, in the ancient chapel, in the roofless convent of the White Penitents, at the cemetery and the Château, the old man shakes his head and croons to himself in a voice ineffably sad, " Ah ! Les Baux ! " Nearly every house in the town is, in some part, hewn out of the rocks, and what carving and masonry they possess is generally on their fronts and gables. . . . The

kitchens and cellars are excavated in the rocks. The ruins of the Chapel of St. Catharine show still the remains



A WINDOW AT  
LES. BAUX.

of the architecture of the thirteenth century, but the other four churches that once ministered to the religious population contain only vestiges of their former style.

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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Of the larger mansions of the town, the most important is that of the "Hôtel de Manvilles," at the end of the Grande Rue, a fifteenth-to-sixteenth-century **building**, the chief features of which are the beautiful windows, framed in with delicate classic pilasters, supporting entablatures composed of simple and dignified mouldings. On one of the wings of the building the inscription "Post Tenebras Lux 1571," on the frieze over a window of great beauty, recalls that Claud II., one of the counts of this house, espoused, at the instigation of his Protestant wife, the cause of the party at the Reformation.

The mansion of the Porcelets, near by the Church of St. Vincent, has been restored, and, after being an orphanage, is now the school for the handful of children who have had the misfortune to be born amidst these melancholy surroundings. Few of them will remain in their native town after they have grown up, and one would imagine that the memories they will carry away with them of their early days will seem like some fantastic dream. The Porcelet family were of the highest social rank in the fourteenth century, and they were also very numerous. These were the first nobles of the town of Arles and



Marquises of Maillane, friends of King René, and the object of his satire.

Regarding the origin of their name, there is a legend that relates in detail how a haughty dame of this family flouted and taunted a poor beggar-woman with having a family too large for a person in her miserable condition to maintain. The woman was, so the story says, really a fairy in disguise, who laid a spell on the high-born dame, condemning her to give birth to as many children as a sow, which happened to be near by, should bring forth little pigs. In time the sow had a litter of nine, and when the great dame had, in the course of time, a family equally large the people nicknamed them Porcelets, a name that stuck to them ever after.

These legends of the past, when recounted on the spot, have a fascination that is enhanced by the romantic surroundings.

One stumbles upon curious reminders of feudal customs, such as the deep narrow cisterns which received a tithe of all the wine made in the district under the manorial sway of the Des Baux.

Across the wide valley, to the westward, the rocks tower one above the other and form the hill of Costa Pera.



Time and the elements have worn its face into crevices and wrinkles and honeycombed it with innumerable caves. Midway up the cliff, there appears a deep hollow which at first might be mistaken for a well. It is, however, the entrance to a series of large caverns, that locally go by the name of the Grotto of the Fairies. Here in the very heart of the rock, cut and worn into weird and fantastic shapes, are halls, passages, and declivities, twistings and windings, amongst which the imagination runs riot and calls up the visions of strange, elfish, unearthly forms to people the uncanny surroundings.

One can easily comprehend that this grotto became the foundation for grotesque legends, and how it might readily acquire a reputation for being the abode of witches who guarded jealously a she-goat made of solid gold, which was bound to bring fortune and prosperity of every conceivable kind to the mortal fortunate and daring enough to carry off the precious curiosity. There are no limits to the phantasms that the mind's eye can see in the deep, mysterious recesses, according to its mood or to the state of the owner's digestion.

Les Baux has many curious legends and traditions, some of them based upon actual experiences, slightly exag-

gerated, and others the effects of the unaided imagination. Of the latter class, a very beautiful one, that has formed the subject of many poems, records the death of the last of the noble house of Des Baux. When the Princess Alix was on her death-bed, the star which had guided her remote ancestor to Bethlehem's manger shone with its



last flash of splendour through the window on the fading princess, and at the moment her soul passed away, the light, which for a thousand years had been the beacon of this illustrious family, went out for ever.

On the heights above the Grotto of the Fairies are the remains of the ancient Roman Camp built by the army of Marius, and within its enclosure the upper casing walls of a cistern remain intact. The remains of another camp

of Marius, which still goes by his name, lie on the hills that overlook the town from the north. The impregnable nature of these positions on the hills around Les Baux thus early singled them out for occupation in times of war and danger, and, when the Phocæan colonists of Arles were driven from their city by the Visigoths, led by Euric, in the fifth century, they found a refuge on these austere mountain slopes.

Two relics of the Roman times, that have aroused much discussion, stand at the foot of the powdery cliffs of Baux. One of these is a huge block of greenish sandstone, about twenty feet high, which has fallen from the heights above. For years, the three life-size figures that are sculptured on this stone were regarded in the country as representing the three Saints, Marie, Martha, and their black servant Sara, whose bodies were alleged to lie in the church by the sea at Les Maries. About the middle of last century a tiny chapel, erected in front of the carved monolith, was dedicated to the three Marys, and called "Les Tremaie." On close examination, it is discovered that the figures are dressed in Roman garments, and although much mutilated and corroded by the weather, they are unmistakable Roman work of either the first century

before or after the Christian Era. Below the figures is an inscription which is undecipherable, containing only the characters

|               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| AE . POSUIT . | F . CALDUS  |
|               | P . . . . . |

The opinion of experts to-day is practically unanimous



in making the three figures represent Caius Marius, Julia Marii, his wife, and Martha, the Syrian prophetess who accompanied them, and was carried about in a litter throughout the campaign. If these deductions are correct, it fixes the date of the monument somewhere about 100 B.C., and gives further proof of the antiquity of Les Baux.

The other Roman monument lies at a little distance, and although smaller is almost as interesting. It has attracted the attention of curious archæological investigators, who have deduced a variety of origins for this stone ; some making it an ancient sacrificial altar, others a simple monument to a man and his wife, probably Caius Marius and Julia.

Les Baux has finished its brilliant career, and it seems fitting that its castle, churches, convents, and mansions should crumble and mingle with the dust of centuries, vanishing from man's sight along with the jousts and tourneys, " Courts of Love," gorgeous processions, Saints' day celebrations, picturesque midnight masses, and all the showy properties of its once romantic stage.

# MONTMAJOUR





## V

### MONTMAJOUR

MONTMAJOUR, or Montmajor as it is often spelt, stands upon a rocky elevation rising out of the extensive flat plain of La Crau. Its situation is unique, and was selected away back in the time when the lands surrounding it were covered with water, and the only means of access was by boats or rafts. Although the antiquity of the site of the monastery built upon this erstwhile island is undoubted, the exact date of the Church and Chapel which constitute the older parts of the group of buildings there to-day, have been the subject of much debate and controversy.

For years, nay for centuries, the famous Chapel of the "Holy Cross" was regarded as a building of the eighth century, the exact date of its construction being A.D. 779. The authority given was a Latin inscription now almost illegible, setting forth how the church was built and dedicated by Charlemagne to commemorate his great victory over the Saracens, and further recording that the

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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rebuilding by him of the Abbey of Montmajour was another token of gratitude. Another inscription (more legible) reads, "Many of the Franks who perished in the combat repose in the chapel of the Monastery. . . . Brothers, pray for them." The inscription refers, of course, to the Saracenic invasions of Provence A.D. 732



and 797, the earlier one repulsed by Charles Martel, and the latter by his grandson Charlemagne. This inscription has, however, to be ignored and regarded as the work of zealous monks at a much later date, anxious to add to the lustre of their monastery, and not too scrupulous in accepting traditions which gave this chapel a celebrity and antiquity wholly undeserved.

It was early in the last century that the pretensions of

the inscription received their death-blow by the discovery of a hitherto unnoticed dedication on the pediment of the porch. The reliability of this find seemed to be confirmed by an ancient charter which attributed the erection of the building to the Abbé Rambert, and its consecration too, some three years later. This date obtained right up to the end of the last century, when expert opinion demonstrated, by external and internal evidences, that although standing on the site of a much older chapel, the present one was not erected until late in the twelfth or early in the thirteenth century.

This little chapel stands about three hundred yards away from the main buildings of the Abbey. The hard rock all around it is carved out into long shallow graves, which, with the exception of one, on the sloping ground near to the larger church of the Abbey, have been opened—that is to say, the heavy slabs of stone that formerly covered them have been removed and the bodies have disappeared. This pillage and desecration of the last resting-places of the brothers of the Monastery was the work of the revolutionary mobs from Arles, who, not content with rich plunder obtained in the Monastery itself, sought for any jewels buried with the dead.

The Chapel of the "Holy Cross" was the mortuary chapel to this cemetery in the rocks, and the sacredness of the spot made such wide appeals to the religious superstitions of the age that many distinguished knights and nobles sought the honour of resting their bones in the enduring tombs cut in the hallowed rocks of Montmajour. The chapel is built in the shape of a cross with equal arms, the ends apsidal, buttressed, and half-vaulted. The square central tower is surmounted by a tiny cupola immediately above a small bell-lantern tower. The chapel has but three small windows, intended more to allow the light that was always kept burning inside the chapel to shed its rays upon the graveyard outside than to light the interior.

There are differences of opinion as to the original object of the chapel, but it seems more than probable that the lantern in the roof was designed to contain the beacon which it was the custom in the Middle Ages to keep burning at night in memory of the dead.

There is no sculptured ornament in the interior of the chapel. The walls are severely plain, but they doubtless were at one time covered with Byzantine frescoes, in harmony with the general architectural style of this

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## MONTMAJOUR

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building which stands in isolated dignity upon the rock above the meres.

The Abbey of Montmajour, now in a ruined state, was in the Middle Ages a "Benedictine" establishment of



great importance and influence, with a reputation for sanctity that drew thousands of pilgrims annually from all parts of the world, across the shallow lagoons in boats and on rafts, the only means of reaching it, until well on

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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into the seventeenth century. The work of draining La Crau began in the sixteenth century, and gradually converted the swamp into a fertile plain; but even as late as the eighteenth century the faithful had to make a part of their pilgrimage by boat. The Abbey retained its great reputation, and increased its power during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, and the lofty modern buildings of the seventeenth century testify to the wealth and ambition of the Order at that time. It, however, suffered a gradual decline after the issue of an order of Louis XVI., confirmed by Rome, suppressing its powers. This was only about three years before the outbreak of the Revolution, which ended for ever the long monastic career of Montmajour.

The approach to the Abbey, across rich low-lying meadows, dotted with feathery trees, is romantic and full of charm, and the ancient buildings stand out like a feudal castle, in strong relief against the sky or distant hills, according to the direction from which it is approached. A castle strongly fortified, for the machicolated tower built in the fourteenth century rises from the most elevated portion of the rock to a height of nearly ninety feet.



The older parts of the chapel or church, like the buildings at Les Baux, are for the most part cut out of the solid rock. The earliest part of the building is hewn in this manner, and in the lowest recesses of the subterranean church there is a small cell about four and a half feet by two feet, carved crudely out of the rocks, and containing a massive stone seat. A small square hole cut in the wall serves to let a stream of light into this tiny cell, which is known as the Confessional of St. Trophimus, the apostle of Provence. This cell is at the end of a series of narrow caves, one of which constitutes the sanctuary, the other contains two tombs excavated in the rock near its face. The small arched windows in the masonry which forms one side of these underground chapels admit the bright light of day, and from them the occupants of the little sanctuary or vestibule could obtain a magnificent view of the distant countryside. As the vestibule was used by the brothers when waiting their turn at the Confessional, these windows would serve to relieve the monotony of many a tedious hour.

The crypt of the Church of the Monastery is sepulchral and gloomy. Instead of a staircase a long passage descends with a gentle slope from the west end of the



church above, and leads to the underground chapel, the reason assigned to this method of entrance being that it allowed of elaborate processions passing from the ancient to the modern building with effective decorum. At the end of this long passage there is a spherically vaulted gallery with seven smaller chapels radiating from



it. A massive altar of great antiquity stands in the middle of the centre chapel. Entirely free from all rich decoration, the whole place reeks of the dark ages, a fitting symbol of a period when art was struggling towards a new expression.

The crypt was probably built in the ninth or tenth century, and rebuilt by the Abbé Rambart towards the end of the eleventh. The church above was started by the same abbot, but was never finished according to the

original plan, for the west front is a hurried piece of construction evidently intended to serve until some future date when the Abbey banking account should be in a sufficiently flourishing state to give an imposing finish to the building.

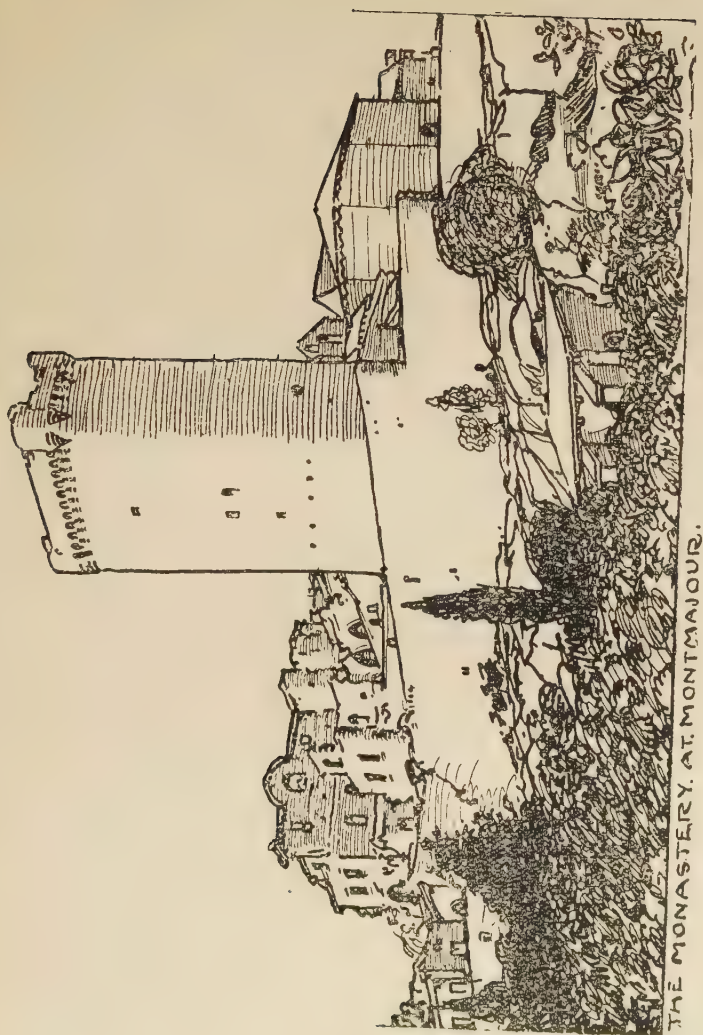
The tower of the Monastery, which gives it the appearance of a fortress, was built in the middle of the fourteenth century, and possesses all the characteristics of the most advanced military architecture of the period. Its walls are built of smaller blocks of stone than is usual in similar buildings of that time. The great hall on the ground floor was used by the inhabitants of the Monastery as a storehouse, containing also a cistern into which the water was collected from the roofs, the overflow finding its way into exterior reservoirs.

The most modern part of the Monastery is to-day in the hands of private owners, but in such a dilapidated condition that it is almost unsafe to venture among its tottering walls. These buildings, erected during a period of the institution's greatest prosperity, suffered more at the Revolution than the older parts of the Abbey. If the florid eighteenth-century buildings were all removed, they would be little loss to the place from an architectural

point of view, for their features strike a discordant note among the simple early Gothic surroundings.

The cloisters of Montmajour are not very unlike those of St. Trophimus at Arles, and if the pillars and capitals of the arcade are less interesting in detail than those of the more famous cloisters, they have a more pleasing and less confusing effect in the mass. Round the walls there are several very beautiful tombs with a variety of early styles of arched canopies—pointed, round, and inflected.

Amongst these is the tomb of Geoffrey VI., a Count of Provence, who died in 1063. He was a generous patron and friend to the Monastery, and in the eleventh century conceded, along with other rights, the privilege of claiming the first sturgeon which should be caught in the river between Mourrade de Bourques and the sea. This typically feudal privilege was, until the Revolution, enforced more by way of custom latterly, and a great procession of holiday-making fishermen, with bands playing and banners flying, accompanied by innumerable sightseers, came on rafts and in boats to the Abbey with their offering. Masses were celebrated for the soul of the good Count, a handsome *pourboire* given to the fishermen, the sturgeon cooked and placed upon the already groaning



THE MONASTERY. AT MONTMAJOUR.



board of the epicurean brothers, and everybody was contented and happy.

The Benedictine Monastery of Montmajour enjoyed so many other privileges and bequests that it grew to be one



of the richest and most powerful in the whole of France. No wonder the laity were keen to swell its holy ranks and enjoy its privileged security and bountiful board, its immunity from taxation and public service. The amazing contrast to the luxury of the Abbey's latter days is the

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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legend of the poverty and homelessness of those for whom it was founded.

The story runs, or, as the troubadours say, it is told and said and related, that when Villegis, King of the Goths, who had already dispossessed the Romans of Arles of their last colony in Gaul, surrendered to the Frankish conqueror Childebert, the latter, hunting one day over his newly-acquired territory in the vicinity of Arles, met with some hermits on a lonely mountain-side whose piety and poverty so touched the victorious barbaric King that he founded for them the Monastery of Montmajour.



## ARLES



## VI

### ARLES

It would seem that Arles has been an important city for over two thousand five hundred years. History can give no authentic records of its beginnings, but, as is generally the case with ancient towns in a similar predicament, legend has taken in hand the task of supplying details, and Arles has its legend, which bears on the face of it some elements of probability. Massilia (now Marseilles) has evidence to show that even long before the Phoceans founded their towns in Gaul, Phœnician seamen, the pioneers of navigation, had discovered its natural harbour, round which the town of to-day is built. Interesting relics of these early traders are still in existence ; and their successors, the Phoceans, who undoubtedly were on the scene as early as 600 B.C., must have found on their arrival that the advantages of the position had been fully appreciated by the earlier settlers, who had built there a town of considerable importance, but which was then in a declining state.

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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The inhabitants of Southern Gaul, a Celtic race, had even at that time their capital at Arles, and the semi-historical legend runs that King Nannos, or Nan, was giving a betrothal feast to which all his warriors were invited, in order that his daughter might choose her husband from among them—presumably the custom at this period.

When the feast was in full swing a stranger appeared upon the scene, a handsome young Greek adventurer from Phoea. The Celtic King welcomed him with an unsuspecting cordiality, and invited him to join the festive board, which he did, much to the chagrin of the assembled company. The King's daughter fell in love with him at first sight and singled him out for high honour, bestowing upon him her heart and hand, to the discomfiture of the native warriors, although her father recognised in her action the guidance of his country's gods. The lucky Greek received in dowry with his bride the lands lying around the spot where he first landed.

He had not, however, a sufficient following of his countrymen with him to populate his newly-acquired territory, so he had recourse to sending his galleys back to his native land to gather in recruits. The newcomers



THE ALYSCAMPS, ARLES.



brought with them fire from their sacred hearths, a priestess and a statue of Diana from Ephesus, where they called on their way, in compliance to the commands of their oracles ; and settled down in the strange country, mixing and intermarrying freely with the native Gauls.



The colony grew and flourished ; the quiet of their mercantile existence varied occasionally by wars and skirmishes with surrounding tribes, whose jealousy and cupidity was aroused by the rapidly growing prosperity of the new colony.

But some centuries later the Massilians were compelled



to call in the assistance of Rome to repel the increasing attacks made upon them and their colonies by the vast hordes of Teutons, Ambrones, and other Northern barbarians. The celebrated campaign of Marius was successful, and gave the conquerors themselves a taste for colonising. The flourishing state of Arles and Marseilles no doubt incited the Empire builders to covet the favourable positions occupied by the Greek settlers.

Cæsar, emulating and surpassing Marius in his campaigning zeal, conquered all Gaul, and under him the first Roman colonies took a firm hold upon the fertile regions in the valley of the Rhone. Arles became a maritime town, which rivalled Marseilles itself. The Celtic inhabitants, mixed strongly with the Phœnician element, were possessed of arts and crafts almost as highly developed as those of the conquering Romans. The city grew in importance until its population numbered 100,000. Traders from all parts of the world flocked to its markets, everything being brought to the city either by river-boats up and down the Rhone, or across the lagoons on rafts, or overland on the backs of mules and horses. The city could offer to its citizens every luxury known to the age.

The great amphitheatre, built or commenced during the reign of Claudius Tiberius Nero, at the time when the power of Rome was at its zenith, could accommodate



nearly 27,000 spectators to witness the wild beast and gladiatorial shows so popular in Rome at that period. It was constructed in the early days of amphitheatres,

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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and is perhaps one of the oldest extant, and gives, together with the Arena at Nîmes, a more vivid impression of the Empire's strength and grandeur than any other Roman monument in France. Although on a much smaller scale than the mighty Coliseum at Rome (which was built at a much later date and replaced earlier buildings in that city, could accommodate 100,000 spectators, and was over 615 feet in length and 510 feet in width, as compared with the Arena at Arles, 450 feet long and 351 feet wide), it gives some notion of the important part the amphitheatre played in the life of the Roman capital.

The amphitheatre at Arles, unlike that of Nîmes, was, if the evidence of the height of the wall of the Podium enclosing the Arena is trustworthy, used for the great fights of lions, tigers, elephants, and other animals, as well as for combats between the gladiators—elaborate and extravagant spectacles that riveted the attention and ministered to the enjoyment of the Roman world for a period extending over seven hundred years. The immense arenas at Arles and Nîmes are proof of the prosperity of these two colonies. Many of the Greek traditions of the Arlesiens were lost sight of and condemned by the



ARCHES OF THE ARENA.  
NÎMES.



conquerors, but the refined and intellectual amusements of the Greeks made a slight appeal to the tastes of the warrior race, who overthrew them, and who built a theatre in Arles, in the first century, under the strong influence of the Greek element in the colony, an influence that had made itself felt also in the architecture of the Arena.

Arles has preserved much of this Greek influence up to the present day ; for beauty cannot die—it influences succeeding ages and fashions all their work, and the sculptures found in Arles are in this respect superior to those of Nîmes and other Roman provincial towns.

The Venus of Arles, which now rests in the Louvre, compared with that of Nîmes, gives a forcible illustration of the different characteristics of Greco-Roman from the more purely Roman art ; a subtle difference to explain, but easily recognised when face to face with the actual work. The Venus, that should have been one of the most cherished glories of a city, whose womenfolk have inherited the beauty of their Phœcean ancestors, is lost to it. Discovered in 1651 by two citizens in the courtyard of their house, built on the site of the theatre, it was sold to the town authorities for £60, and they, anxious to



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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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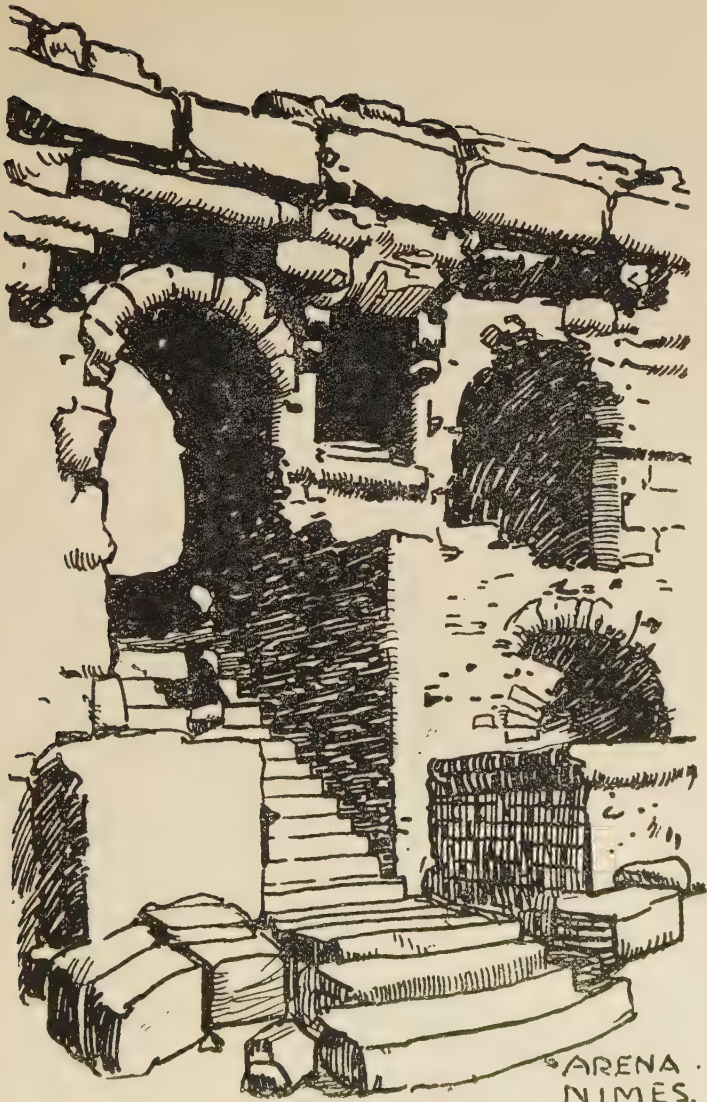


curry favour with the "Grand Monarch," presented it to him in 1683. Louis had the statue restored and placed among his treasures in the Palace at Versailles, whence it was removed in the last century to where it now stands in the Louvre.

The Amphitheatre at Arles is built upon slightly rising ground, and the practical builders took every advantage of the rocky foundations to save themselves any unnecessary building, so that the lower galleries of the edifice only exist on a part of its circumference. The modern buildings that have sprung up and surrounded it prevent as good a view of the ensemble as is possible at Nîmes. The interior galleries have stone lintels instead of the Roman arch as in those of the latter. The simplicity of the mouldings and carvings of the capitals is more akin to the Greek than to the later Roman style of architectural decoration, and although the building is not nearly so imposing as the Nîmes Arena, or even that vast relic of the Empire at El-Djem in Tunisia, it has many features that are distinct from either.

From the Rue Voltaire one looks up the broad flight of steps which lead to the north end of this mass of masonry and sees superimposed stages of arches; the





ARENA.  
NÎMES.



lower series divided by simple square Doric pillars, the upper by Corinthian columns, only a few of which still possess their capitals. They are weather-worn and greatly damaged, and it is only by picking out more or less perfect bits, here and there, that evidence of its original beauty can be obtained. Internally, great galleries run round the inside walls, and lead out by flights of steps and passages on to three great ranges of seats. The original seating arrangements have undergone much change, but the traces of the disposition of the Cavea can easily be made out with a little trouble.

The high wall of the Podium is cased with smooth marble, upon the face of which there is a cornice that in former times supported an extra gallery, when the performance was not of a character too dangerous to the spectators. The upper galleries, reserved for the common people and slaves, have been roughly used, for during the eighth century, when the city was threatened by an invasion of the Saracens, a large number of the inhabitants took up their abode within the great ellipse; the arches were built up, and four towers erected at the north and south, east and west, turning the place into a vast fortress. Streets were formed in all directions by

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROvence

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the two hundred buildings that grew up, and a market-place and church were erected. Right on, until about a hundred years ago, when it was cleared by the Mayor and

municipality, this town remained a squalid blot upon the city. Two of the four towers still remain.



After the removal of the "town" from the heart of the arena, it was utilised again for the amusements of the people. The first step towards re-establishing spectacles was the annual ceremony of branding the bulls, which was half in the nature of a "bull-fight"; and later in the last century bullfights, very much

after the fashion of those of Portugal, were staged both here and at Nîmes—the bull being played with in a harmless way without being killed or tortured as in Spain. But this has not proved sufficiently exciting for the Southern blood, and to-day tauromachy in its most

aggravated forms obtains in the arenas of Provence : horses and bulls pour out the red heart-blood upon the sanded arena, as did the gladiators, martyrs, and savage beasts of old ; and if the Greeks have transmitted their beauty to the womenfolk of Arles, the Romans have been no less successful in implanting in their ancient colony some of their characteristic love of what, to put it mildly, might be called exciting pastimes.

The world of to-day looks back with horror on the Roman holidays, which strangely enough grew out of a religious celebration in honour of the dead. The despised barbarians of the old world burnt victims on the funeral pyre ; the proud Romans, exulting in their superiority over the untutored savages, outdid them in barbarity.

The rapid development of the show of dying agony went on from the earliest times, when slaves were first immolated upon the tombs of the illustrious dead, until the time when the Gothic King Theodoric took Arles—one long record of the wanton pouring out of human blood. From an offering to appease the gods, it grew to be a slaughter for the gratification of an insatiable lust for bloodshed in the body politic.

The first gladiatorial fighters appear upon the scene

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROvence

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about two hundred years before the Christian era, and the strange funeral custom became so fashionable that it was a common thing for a son to celebrate his father's funeral with a fight in which hundreds of forced combatants took part and fought to the death. Julius Cæsar gave such encouragement to the "sport" that peaceful citizens and political opponents grew alarmed at the rapid growth of the gladiatorial fraternity, who were a standing menace to their city. But, in spite of the endeavours of the more enlightened emperors, the passion for the arena increased, as hundreds of records show. Slaves, prisoners of war, fair-haired Saxons and tattooed Britons, swarthy Moors and Oriental Turks, criminals and Christians, were exhibited and put to death by one another in front of thousands of spectators, who never tired of these holocausts of blood.

To-day in Spain, and in her now lost colonies, similar appetite exists for the blood of bulls and horses, and all attempts to put down these gory spectacles meet with violent opposition. The great bullrings in Spain and Mexico still preserve something of the atmosphere, attenuated perhaps, that pervaded the arenas of old, and, mild as the exhibitions are by comparison with the





ARCADE OF  
ARENA AT  
NIMES.





ancient pastimes, they have enough horror to sicken the strong nerves of Northern people.

One cannot wander about the great corridors, or up and down the giant stairways of seats of the Arenas at Arles and Nîmes, without being haunted by the ghosts of the distant past. Here, on the front seats once reserved for magistrates, senators, and patricians, one can picture the richly-robed crowds who patronised the ring. There sat the guilds and corporations whose names were inscribed upon the places reserved for them, as can still be seen upon the Arena at Nîmes. Higher up were the plebeians, the common people, the hundred and one unclassed folk who followed lowly occupations; highest of all, standing outlined against the sky, the dense crowd of slaves, with straining eyes, stretched necks, and bated breath, gazed down upon the combatants, who looked like specks in the distant oval.

A more pleasant train of thought is set in motion by the ruined Theatre which lies quite near. Dating from about the same time, it betrays even more of the Grecian influence than does the Arena. It is only, however, by a close attention to the fragments that lie in a small railed enclosure at the foot of the Tower of St. Roland, that one

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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can form any just estimate of the beauty which this example of Greek architecture possessed. The theatre is in ruins, and the two columns of African and Carrara marble which still stand amidst the beautiful fragments of bruised masonry have an interest which, in the light of historical knowledge, is of pathetic loveliness. The ruins are enclosed by houses on three sides, the fourth being



bounded by the gardens of the town. The authorities have men at work, keeping the relic from suffering more damage by the continual wearing of the elements, and the Cavea, or auditorium, is being renovated, so that, when the restorations in hand are completed, this part of the construction will regain somewhat of its former appearance.

The theatre at Arles is essentially different from that at Orange: the latter being entirely Roman in style

and construction, and adapted for the performances which, under the Romans, degenerated into such demoralising obscenities. So degrading did the spectacles become even in Greek Arles that, during a wave of religious enthusiasm, which swept over the town in the first Christian centuries, a band of the townspeople nearly demolished the theatre, breaking up the statues, altars, columns, and leaving it unfit for further performances.

The theatres of the Greeks, which played an important part in the life of the people, had developed from simple wooden constructions, liable to damage by fire, into places highly embellished with sculpture and marble columns, carefully studied so as to render the acoustic properties nearly perfect. The arrangement universally adopted throughout the Ionian Isles and Asia Minor is well exemplified in the Arles theatre. The large orchestra, floored with beautiful marble, parts of which still remain, was not intended for the audience. This huge semi-circle, which corresponds to the stalls and pit of the modern theatre, was reserved entirely for the musicians and chorus, two parallel flights of steps leading up from it to the narrow stage, making communication easy between the two divisions of the stage.

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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This theatre differs from the native Greek theatre in regard to the site chosen. It was the invariable custom to select a sloping hillside upon which the Cavea could be easily constructed, but here, at Arles, the Roman practice has been adopted with a Greek theatre, and the great semicircular seats of the auditorium are built up on an arcade which rises up from the level ground. At Orange, oddly enough, the position is reversed, and a purely Roman theatre is built upon a site such as the Greeks would have considered perfect. Round the outside of the Cavea of the theatre at Arles there was a beautifully chiselled frieze, fragments of which are collected together on the site. It is doubtful if the theatre had a colonnade behind the top row of seats, as was customary in the native Greek theatre, but the evidences of the large orchestra, the narrow stage, the beautiful proscenium, the refined designs of the mouldings and carvings, are sufficient to stamp this building as Greek.

The persistence of Greek traditions throughout centuries, at Arles, is curious, but shows how strong the element must have been in the city. Its position upon the rocky eminence, surrounded by the miasmatic lagoons, tended, doubtless, to preserve its insularity and the

provincialism which it still enjoys. Even the "tour de Roland," which was erected on the southern side of the theatre during the Middle Ages, has not escaped the classic influence, for the engaged flat columns on its face have a restraint which would seem to have been engendered by the graceful beauty of its surroundings.

In the early seventeenth-century Church of St. Anne, which stands at the north-west corner of the Place de la République, or Place Royale as it is now called, there are gathered together many beautiful fragments of the sculptured statues, busts, heads, and tombs that have been found in and around the town. The tombs, both Pagan and early Christian, are of exceptional historic interest, not only to the



GREEK  
TYPE.  
ARLES

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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townsfolk, but to the world at large, for by their curious inscriptions much may be gathered of the occupations followed, and the lives led, by the early inhabitants of the town. To go through them all would require a work devoted to the subject alone, but they are varied enough to show that Arles enjoyed a wide celebrity as a burial-ground.

The Pagan and Christian tombs found in the Alysamps (Elysian Fields) have been an inexhaustible mine of wealth, not only to collectors and museums, but to the inhabitants of the town and surrounding country. The massive monolithic stone coffins have been turned to use, and in the district one finds them converted into water-troughs, benches, washtubs, and even pig-troughs. The dust of the dead of twenty centuries amounts to very little, and the natives evidently thought it a work of supererogation to carve, with much labour, the limestone rocks into articles of daily use when they had such quantities lying ready to their hands.

The Church of St. Anne forms a very fitting museum for many of the interesting tombs that have been rescued from the hands of ruthless utilitarians, and there they can be studied in peaceful and solemn surroundings. Many



of the more imposing of these ancient funeral monuments are now used as altars in the churches of Provence, as in the Church of St. Trophimus, immediately opposite the Museum.

The inscriptions on these tombs form an abbreviated biography of the former occupants of the town. They tell of "Nautæ Arlatenses," or boatmen, who plied the craft that carried the merchandise up and down the Rhone; the "Fabrii navales," or naval builders, a body that were held in high esteem by the most exalted in the city; and the naval architects, a grade higher still, professional gentlemen who mixed with intimacy with the "Upper Ten"; the "Utriculare," a separate body of watermen who plied large rafts, supported by air bladders made of sheep-and-goat skins, over the shallow lagoons to outlying islands and to the port of Fos. From this source we learn of the oil merchants and sail or tarpaulin manufacturers, as well as of the students and scholars who flourished in the Gallic-Greco-Roman city.

One of the most interesting biographical tombs removed from the Alyscamps is that of Julia Tyrannia. It records not only the highly appreciated virtues and accomplishments of this young lady, whose life was cut short at the

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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age of twenty, but on two panels on one side the musical instruments on which she performed are cut in deep relief: a lyre, a guitar, very much like a modern mandoline, a water-organ with nine pipes, one of the earliest



representations of this instrument (there is a similar one carved in the fourth century on the tomb of Theodosius at Constantinople), and a syrinx, or panpipes, in a box. Underneath this latter there is a lamb, which might either

typify the gentle disposition of the occupant or that she was of the Christian faith.

There is often great difficulty in distinguishing between the Pagan and Christian tombs, owing to the similarity of the symbols used ; but in some cases the newer faith expresses hopes that are lacking in the Pagan inscriptions, as a comparison of these two free translations clearly shows :

“ Oh grief ! how many tears have been shed upon this tomb  
Of Julia Lucina, who in life was very dear to her mother :  
Cut off in the flower of youth, she lies buried beneath this stone.  
Would that she could return !  
Were it only to know how great is my sorrow.  
She lived twenty years ten months and thirteen days.  
Julia Parthenope, her unhappy mother, raised this monument to her.”

And this on the tomb of Concordius, a Christian priest of the fourth century :

“ Irreproachable and pious, pure in life and body,  
Concordius, here entombed, lived for eternity.  
In his youth he occupied the office of a deacon,  
He was afterwards chosen as a priest by the Divine Law.  
He had scarcely completed his fiftieth year when  
He was transported prematurely into the starry hall of the Almighty,  
Where his loving mother and brother aspire to find him.”

The inscriptions on most of the tombs evince that the departed were held in tender regard by their bereft

relatives and friends. Some of them are quite touching human documents, manifesting the deep attachment that parents had for their children. Many elaborately carved tombs, with short stumpy figures, lacking entirely any æsthetic beauty, but full of ingenuity to express symbolically the Christian story and traditions, have been found; and one of the latest additions to the Museum is an early Pagan tomb of great excellence of workmanship, evidently belonging to the first century of the Christian era. The figures carved round it have an entirely different character from those on the Christian tombs of a later date. This was found in La Camargue when the railway to Les Maries was in course of construction.

The Alyscamps, the vast cemetery, where most of these tombs were found, lies to the south of the town on the farther side of the broad "Avenue Victor Hugo." The antiquity of this burial-ground is indisputable. When it was consecrated for Christian burial by St. Trophimus may well be a matter for dispute, for it is a little uncertain who St. Trophimus really was. He is the apostle of Arles, and legend makes him one of the companions of St. Paul who accompanied him on his travels; but this claim was not put forward until the

twelfth century, and after the time when the saint's bones were transferred from the Alyscamps to the Church of St. Etienne, now famous as the Church of St. Trophimus. Whoever the St. Trophimus may have been, there is very little doubt that the Church of St. Honorat was built by



St. Virgil, who probably utilised the site of an ancient Pagan or early Christian temple.

The Alyscamps was well supplied with churches and chapels, at one time possessing as many as nineteen. Even the early Church of St. Honorat, when it was rebuilt, had chapels added to it by the pious, and still more by the aristocratic families of the seventeenth century. The

nave of the church is in ruins, although other parts are in tolerable repair. The pillars, which support the roof and separate the nave from the aisles, are enormous columns about thirty feet in circumference. The additions of later times have made the interior plan of the church rather confusing, and the ruinous state of the exterior gives one the impression that a bombardment or an earthquake shock have rendered some assistance in tumbling walls and ceilings to the ground.

All through the Middle Ages the Alyscamps was in high favour as a burial-ground, and bodies from distant parts were brought to it for interment, but its popularity declined somewhat after the removal of the remains of St. Trophimus. At intervals there seemed to be a slight revival, for we find that chapels were added to the original collection of buildings as late as the seventeenth century, although before this period the collector had been busy among the tombs, and Charles IX. (the same monarch who consented to the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day) gave away many of the more beautiful of the sarcophagi to his friends and intimates.

The vast field of tombs rapidly fell a prey to the vandal hands of collectors, and one can readily understand that



ROMAN THEATRE, ARLES.





the large trade in stone coffins would make folk timid of patronising a graveyard that was subject to such unholy



raids. Much ground of the Alyscamps has been turned over to the plough, and the railway company has erected

large repairing shops upon a portion of it near the Church of St. Honorat. A number of the great massive tombs have, however, been collected and placed at the foot of the tall poplars that line either side of the avenue that leads from the ruined gateway of the cemetery to the ancient church. Here and there other monuments and larger vaults break the monotonous regularity of the long series of stone mausoleums, but nothing can rob the Alyscamps of the mournful pathos of its history.

The Cathedral of St. Trophimus, which stands opposite the Museum, was built in the twelfth century, and has a distinguished west portal. The absolute plainness of the surrounding walls enhances the rich effect of the deeply recessed arch which springs from the curious sculptured frieze that forms the lintel of the door. On this porch the characteristic ornamentations of the Greeks, Romans, and Gauls have all been pressed into service without injury to one another, although the spirit that animates the whole is mainly concerned in giving expression to the Christian story.

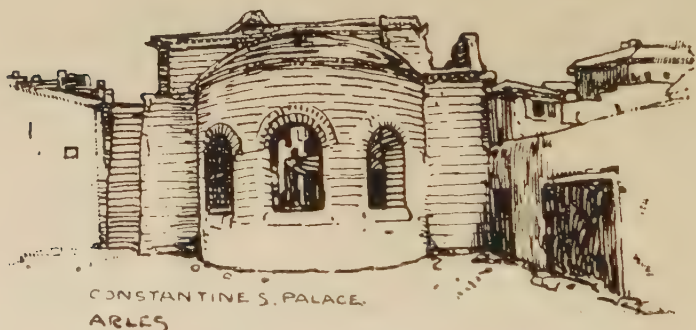
The interior of the Cathedral is plain and simple after the elaborate work of the porch. The nave is separated from the narrow aisles by clustered pillars, which rise

gracefully into lofty ogival vaults. The effect is a trifle gloomy and severe, but age adds its charm to this church, as it does to all the ancient buildings of Provence. The cloisters of St. Trophimus are justly famous, and like those at Montmajour and St. Paul's at St. Remy, portions of them date from the eleventh century. The capitals of the double columns supporting the arcade in the cloisters at Arles are carved with religious subjects, so that even in the hours of relaxation, when they were taking exercise, the brothers had before their eyes, written in the stone, the story of their faith—right up to date too, for the monster “Tarasque” which St. Martha slew has not been overlooked, and on one of the capitals the sculptor has done his best to perpetuate its terrible visage.

Arles has a past unique in the annals of France. Every great movement that has taken place in the civilised world for the last two and a half thousand years helped to mould and shape the town one sees to-day. Its history of traditions reflects something of every period. The greatest, perhaps, was its connection with the Emperor Constantine, who lived for a period at the Palace, now ruined, which bears his name. His influence and tolerance

combined to unite, at Arles, Pagan and Christian arts and religions. Everywhere one sees evidences of the fusion of the Greek and Gaul, the Gallic-Greek with the Roman, and still more the grafting of the new faith on to the old Pagan forms.

The city, proud of its traditions, may not be as happy



in its relations with modern life and commerce as it was in the past with contemporary activities. Marseilles has left it centuries behind in the march of progress, and the great clumsy river-boats of the Rhone, that lie moored to the banks at Arles, contrast unfavourably with the ocean liners that crowd the harbours of the great seaport town. The Greek theatre and the Roman amphitheatre, built during the Empire's greatest prosperity, are surrounded



DOORWAY.  
AT ARLES.





with the earliest buildings and primitive arts of the revolutionary Christianity.

Everywhere in the town one comes across bits of ancient carvings and sculptures built into modern walls. Even the once palatial residence of the first Christian Emperor, to whom the town owed much of its prosperity, is to-day surrounded by humble buildings that thrust themselves against it with irreverent familiarity.

In the Place Royale there stands a curious obelisk found in the ancient Roman circus—a link with a still older civilisation. This Egyptian column was discovered towards the end of the seventeenth century, but was not placed in its present position till 1829.

It is only natural that Arles, which was probably the first town of any importance in Gaul to receive the Gospel, should be rich in Christian traditions and relics, and, if one can give credence to the legends of the city, it was, in the first century, about thirty years at most after the Crucifixion, closely in touch with the holy men and women, who are reputed to have landed at the point where the desolate little village of Les Saintes Maries still stands. This little town lies not more than twenty miles from Arles, and although most coastlines alter their

contour and position in very short periods, geologists and scientists have asserted that the regions of the Camargue have not sensibly changed for twenty centuries. This fact, together with the recent discovery on the Camargue of a tomb of the first century, and the inscription found on the site of the Church of Les Maries, has somewhat revived belief in the ancient legend that King René popularised when he altered the name of the Church of St. Marie of the Boats, which dated from the sixth century, to Les Maries.

The interest that attaches to Christian Arles is deepened when we dip into the ancient traditions of the town. These old legends of the Saints period and the stones of Arles all speak of them, and keep alive many customs that a too prosaic common sense would soon allow to die.

Its population has diminished sadly since the Roman ramparts hemmed in and fortified the town, but the narrow streets and tightly packed houses seem hardly enough for the present population, which is barely one-third of what it was in its palmy days. Its curious twisting streets form a maze that is puzzling to the stranger, and the four principal places are replete with bewildering entrances and exits. The Place du Forum

is small and almost modern, squeezed into the very heart of the town.

All that remains of the ancient forum are two pillars



supporting a small entablature, so damaged and shorn of detail as to suggest the art of Egypt. In front of it stands the statue of Mistral, the poet of Provence, who

loved his country, its natural beauty, art, and legends with a passion that only a native can understand. His patriotism swelled so within him that he gave the Nobel



prize of £4,000, awarded to him in 1904, to the Museum founded by him in Arles. He sang his country's praises in hundreds of poems and verses, and many of them in the Provençal dialect. He was an enthusiast, whose ardour increased with advancing years. His statue stands

in the busiest, or at least the most characteristic, part of the ancient town.

What there is of life centres in the Forum, noisy with the stamping of the fly-tormented cab horses, who stand round the little square waiting to be hired. Two hotels, four or five cafés and bars, two hairdresser's shops, two newspaper and book shops, and one devoted to the sale of antique curios, make up the Place du Forum. Although the traffic in the town is small, it creates a deafening noise as it passes over the cobble-stoned streets.

So familiar are the inhabitants with classic beauty, daily before their eyes in dying monuments and living womenfolk, that they see no incongruity in the statuettes of the "Venus of Arles" or other classic figures being used by shopkeepers to illustrate the application of belts and surgical appliances and even modern clothing. Extremes meet in Arles; beauty and decay exist side by side; art and dirt ever did go hand in hand; and the loveliest women in the whole of France, perhaps in the world to-day, reek of the most obnoxious odour the nostril ever encountered, the pungent smell of garlic.



NÎMES





## VII

### NÎMES

NÎMES, unlike its contemporary and neighbour Arles, has contrived to flourish even in a prosaic and commercial age. Its industries, light and refined in character, the weaving of silk and the pressing of the grapes, are not too violently opposed to its ancient traditions of beauty and luxurious living. Like Arles, it has an early origin, but of a religious rather than a mundane order. The Celtic inhabitants of Gaul fixed upon the site, and gave it a name which in the language of its founders signifies a spring. The Romans early in the first century appreciated and coveted the spot, which was soon occupied and named Nemausus. The mysterious spring that wells up at the foot of the little mountain Cavalier, sacred to the ancient Celts, assumed great importance in the estimation of the newcomers. Its fame spread far and wide, and much of the wealth and ingenuity of Rome was spent in building and beautifying the city that rapidly grew up

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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from the ruins of the Celtic town which nestled round the spot where the "God of the fountain" resided and was worshipped.

The Celtic tribes, who were dispossessed or conquered by the invading Romans, were far from being untutored



savages. They knew and bartered with the Greek colonists at Arles and Marseilles, and Celtic coins and bronzes discovered in the neighbourhood of Nîmes give abundant evidence of strong Hellenic influences.

The wondrous spring which gave rise to the ancient city still gushes out in an inexhaustible volume of water, which finds its outlet through canals into the Vistre. The Baths, built by Agrippa in the first century at the foot of the hill, were supplied by the sacred well, and their

extent and elegance show how important and wealthy the colony had become. Stone terraces, courts, and promenades, ornamented with urns and statues, are now built upon the site, and the water of the spring is allowed



to overflow into the apartments and chambers of the ancient Baths. The gardens are very beautiful, the brilliant white of the stone balustrade, terraces, and steps, contrasting with and adding to the beauty of the thickly wooded hill that rises at the back. After the gardens at

Arles, and even Avignon, this garden of the Fountain seems fresh and joyous ; there is an air of perpetual youth about it which the genii of the spring seem unwilling to abandon.

The statues that adorned the place in the Roman days have vanished ; here, as elsewhere, the collector and vandal have had their way with the smaller objects of art, but the place is not dead nor deserted. Succeeding ages so felt the beauty of the spot that they have adorned it with the best works they could produce.

The habit the ancients had of throwing small coins into these waters to propitiate the gods and goddesses to whom the spot was sacred, accounts for the almost inexhaustible supply of coins that have been and still are discovered in the "Spring." Thousands of these have found their way into museums and private collections, and amongst them the curious "pied du sanglier," a coin which has puzzled many numismatists.

The coin, or medal, has one of its edges extended or drawn out into a shape resembling the leg of a boar. The obverse of these coins has the heads of Augustus and Agrippa embossed upon it, with the letters IMP . . . P . P . . . DIVIF . . . , and on the reverse is a crocodile chained to a palm-tree, with the letters COL. to the left

and NEM. to the right, separated by the palm-tree. It is thought that the boar's leg and foot on these coins, or medals, may be some special compliment to the Gauls, to whom the boar was sacred. The inscription on the coin is common enough, and the heads of Augustus and Agrippa are of course meant for the heads of Octavius Augustus,



THE "PIED DE SANGUER"

the grand-nephew of Julius Cæsar, Emperor in 27 B.C., and Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, the great general who was the life-long friend and son-in-law of Augustus.

He was a great benefactor to Nîmes, and built the gigantic Pont du Gard which brought the water into the town, the spring of Nemausus being too sacred to use for drinking and domestic purposes. It is in compliment to Agrippa that the crocodile tied to the palm-tree is

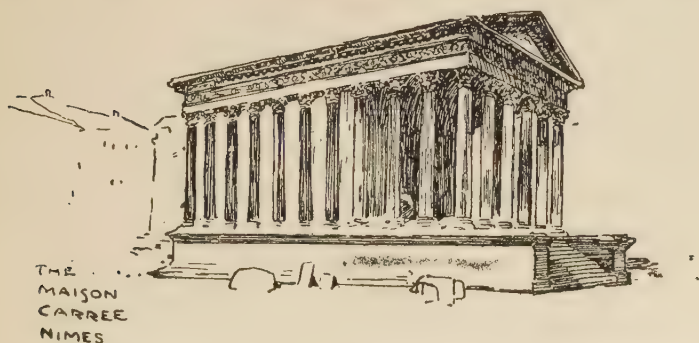
stamped on the reverse of these coins, symbolic of the subjugation of the Egyptian power when Antony was defeated at Actium. This device of the palm-tree and crocodile has been adopted as the arms of the town. Agrippa was a warrior and organiser of the first order, and the honours that his friend the Emperor showered upon him were no more than he deserved, for Rome owes to him its Pantheon, and Nîmes its Pont du Gard.

The brilliance of Nîmes at the beginning of the Christian era was unrivalled in the whole of Gaul. During this epoch, buildings of the most splendid character sprang up on all sides, until, in the time of Antoninus Pius (whose father was a Roman Consul in Nemausus), the great Arena was erected.

The Maison Carrée, which has for centuries excited the admiration of the civilised world, is the finest classic temple extant. Built during the first years of the Christian era, it was dedicated to the two sons of Agrippa, Caius and Lucius, who were adopted by their grandfather, the Emperor Augustus, at their father's death. The youths both died young, and without accomplishing anything worthy of record, but as long as the Maison Carrée stands their names will go down to posterity.



The small temple has been portrayed on canvas and paper thousands of times; familiarity with its graceful form can never exhaust its charms; measurements and analysis do not assist in making its beauty more apparent. Kings and Emperors have coveted it, and the miracle is that it has escaped destruction or removal. Napoleon



was contemplating this latter when more pressing affairs demanded his attention, and Louis XIV., at the suggestion of the architect Colbert, would have transported it to Versailles, but the task was found to be impossible. Each succeeding age endeavours to pay its tribute to this flower of Greco-Roman art, but none has ever succeeded in describing the indescribable. Arthur Young, who visited Nîmes in the course of his travels through France during the Revolution, says :

"I visited the Maison Carrée yesterday evening, this morning, and three times during the course of the day. It is without comparison the most trifling, the most agreeable building I have ever seen. Without having an imposing grandeur, or displaying any extraordinary magnificence that might create surprise, it rivets the attention. In its proportions there is a magic harmony that charms the eye. It would be impossible to single out any special part for excellence of beauty, for it is altogether perfect in symmetry and grace."

The temple stands in a square which was the Forum in Roman days; the remains of the foundations indicate the position which the contemporary buildings occupied. To-day the square is surrounded with modern buildings, but sufficient space is left between them and the temple to permit of its being viewed from all sides.

The modern theatre that stands on the left is classic in style, with Ionic pillars supporting the entablatures of its porch, but a glance at it is sufficient to demonstrate to what depths a modern imitation of a classic style can sink,

The temple, although in good preservation, has in its time seen many vicissitudes. Towards the end of the

Middle Ages it was installed as a town hall or council house, and its interior fitted to accommodate its new occupiers; but evidently it was not quite suitable, for, in



the sixteenth century, the town authorities parted with it to a private person, in exchange for a piece of land upon which they could erect a building more adapted to their

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

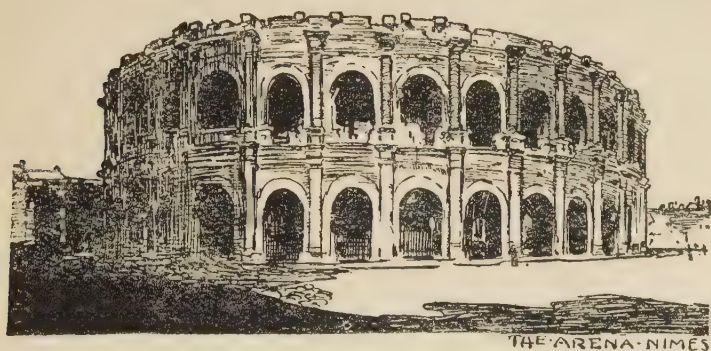
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requirements. The new proprietor had little respect for the beauty of the ancient temple, and had no compunction in altering it to suit his prosaic needs. It was about this period that the Duchess d'Uzès tried to purchase the building to serve her and her descendants as a place of sepulture. This attempt to turn it into a family vault, however, failed; but the noble lord was more successful who managed to purchase and convert the temple into a stable, although this vandalism was loudly protested against by the learned and artistic inhabitants of the city. It changed hands again and passed into possession of the Augustine friars, who transformed it into a church or chapel, their occupation being conditional on their offering up on fête day masses and prayers for their King and Country. After the Revolution, the Government of the restoration stepped in and rescued beauty's temple from further humiliations and abuse, and now a collection of the rare and precious relics of the most classic town in France is housed in its choicest building.

The other famous relic of Nemausus, the Arena, has been mentioned previously in connection with that of Arles. It is in much better preservation than the latter and more imposing, as it stands where an uninterrupted

view of its vast proportions can be obtained. Smaller in actual measurement than the arena at Arles, it impresses one as being much larger. It has had a similar history, however, for in the fifth century the Visigoths who possessed the town turned it into a fortress, and the Saracens, who A.D. 719 had made themselves masters



THE ARENA NÎMES

of Septimania or Languedoc, used it as a stronghold until they were driven out by the powerful Charles Martel.

Later in its history the Arena was occupied by over two thousand Nimansians, who built within the great ellipse a town of narrow streets and houses, the endless galleries and arcades offering a series of almost ready-made dwellings. They had a church too, the remains of which are being carefully preserved. The exterior of this

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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Arena is pure Roman, as befits a building built for the Roman national sport. The two arcades of bold, deep-sunk arches are gloomily mysterious even when the brilliant sunlight illumines all around. At night the gloom and mystery increases, and the footfall of the solitary passer-by awakens echoes through the endless vaults that seem to reach into the beginning and end of time. And yet when the moon creeps up and throws her pale rays over the giant seats that rise in circles like the rings on a disturbed pool, the Arena has a beauty all its own--unpaintable, unspeakable.

The gladiatorial fights would seem to have been the most prevalent kind of sport that was witnessed in the Arena, for it has been suggested over and over again that the low wall of the podium would render fights between wild or ferocious animals unsafe to the most important of the spectators. On one of the stones in the podium there is, amongst others, one inscription which has an interest in showing that the important guilds of Nîmes had places perpetually reserved for them in the distinguished foremost position of the podium. This inscription reads N. RHOD . ET . ARAR, XL . DDN . which has been deciphered " Nautæ of the Rhone and of



the Saone, 40 places by decree of the Decuriones of Nemausus." The watermen were evidently a guild of considerable social importance to have such honourable positions assigned to them, unless they were a similar body to the guilds of our own capital, whose names have little connection with the occupations of their members.

The general arrangements of the Arena are similar to those at Arles, but the whole building is in a much better state of preservation. During the last few years bull-



THE  
VENUS OF  
NÎMES.

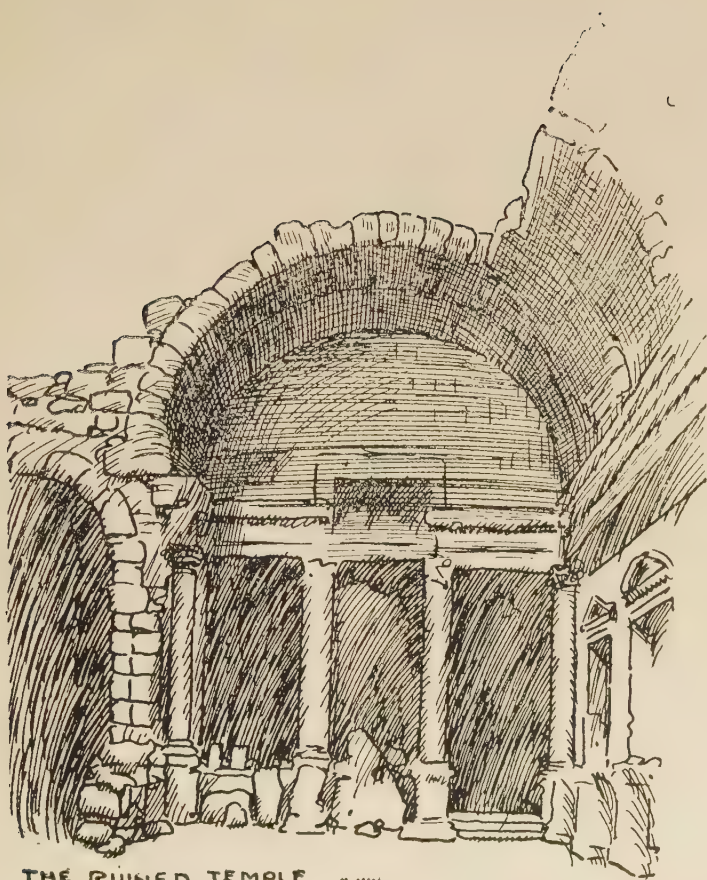
fighting, both in the Portuguese and Spanish fashions, has taken place regularly in the Arena. In fact, even in the smaller villages or towns of Provence, the sport is so



very popular that temporary makeshift buildings are often erected, but at Nîmes and Arles the splendid arenas enable the displays to be witnessed by more than the present populations of these towns. No use is, however, made of the great stone corbels that project in two rows round the top of the exterior walls, and which in Roman times supported great poles from which enormous sheets of sailcloth were stretched to protect the spectators from the burning sun.

The gladiators were a large fraternity at Nîmes, and many of the inscriptions preserved in the Musée Lapidaire refer directly or indirectly to them. The skill of the different classes of fighters is recorded along with their domestic virtues—testimony which adds pathos to their tragic fate. Many of them were good fathers and faithful husbands, who left anxious hearts behind them when they entered the arena, and aching voids when they returned no more. The Roman courage of the professional gladiators was not less terrible than the Roman cruelty of their employers, and loving hearts were lacerated every time a human body was butchered to make a Roman holiday.

In the same little museum at Nîmes where these in-



THE RUINED TEMPLE  
OF DIANA. NIMES.



scriptions now repose there are many fragments of the most exquisite carvings, enriched mouldings, and delicate capitals, all of them speaking eloquently of vanished buildings that adorned the ancient Nemausus.

Of the two other monuments of the ancient city, mere wrecks of their former selves, which have claimed the attention of architects, artists, and archæologists, one, the Temple of Diana, stands in the beautiful garden of the fountain on the site of a much older temple dedicated to the nymphs of the waters by the earliest Roman colonists, probably by Augustus himself. The ruined temple standing to-day was very likely erected about two centuries later, and the object of its presence on the spot has caused, as is usual with these early buildings, considerable difference of opinion ; but it undoubtedly had something to do with the cult of the goddess of the fountain, notwithstanding the presence in it of niches reserved for the statues of other divinities.

It is a solid structure containing a large hall with a barrel-vaulted roof in a bad state of repair. The worship of the goddess died out in the fourth century, and the deserted buildings falling, in the dark ages, into the hands of the Benedictines, it was given over to the female

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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devotees of the new religion. These nuns continued in possession for some six hundred years, a long period during which little is known of it, except the facts stated.

HOLY ORDERS  
NIMES



There is some kind of a record that a fire took place in it about the end of the nuns' tenancy, and there seems to be a probability that it had at that time been turned into a hay store. Its later history is a long record of disaster,

for it was used as a fortress, and war had its share in bringing about the ruin. But whatever troubles it may have come through, it has an honoured old age, and all the care and protection which the appreciative twentieth century can suggest is bestowed upon it.

The other early monument, dating from before the first



century, is the Porte d'Auguste, which was built, 16 B.C., in the ramparts of the town. It was for defensive purposes, and but little remains of the original structure save two large arches and two smaller ones, which have still smaller niches above. In the stormy reign of Charles VI. by his orders a great fortress was erected over this gateway, and for nearly four hundred years this, perhaps the

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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earliest piece of Roman architecture in Nîmes, was buried out of sight and out of ken. The other Roman gates of Nîmes have nearly vanished, portions only remaining of another fortified gateway that stood and guarded the southern entrance to the town.

On the summit of the hill from which the spring of Nemausus issues, and which is 350 feet above the sea-level, there stands an octagonal ruined tower, that rises to a height of about 90 feet. There is a theory that the tower stands on the site of a more ancient one, built by a Phocæan-Celtic population to guard their city. The tower was originally some thirty feet higher than it is to-day. The lower story of the imposing mass was built round a rising mound of earth which filled up the interior and made a solid stony foundation for the superstructure. It is known as the "Tour Magne," and was built, probably, about the same time as the Porte d'Auguste, and formed a part of the system of the town's fortifications, for it commands such an extensive view of the country round that there can be little doubt that it was a watch-tower from which the military of the time could observe the movements of any threatening danger to their town. The "Tour Magne" must have many



memories ; if it could only speak, its autobiography would be full of magic charm. It could tell of fierce strife and a crowd of stirring incidents that took place between Roman and barbaric Celt, Visigoths, Franks, and Bur-



gundians, and of the smaller but fierce struggles of which no history exists.

But one story has been put on record, the only legend current about the old fortress, and strangely unconnected with warlike undertakings. In the sixteenth century a farmer named Trucat heard of a prognostication made by the noted astrologer Nostradamus to the

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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effect that a husbandman would make a fortune by discovering a golden cock. Golden animals and birds seem to have run riot through the imaginations of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The credulous Trucat fondly believed that he was the fortunate man indicated by the



FRIEZE OF 12<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ON THE  
CATHEDRAL AT NIMES

prophecy, and that the treasure he was to discover lay buried in the rocky earth, which filled the lower storey of the famous "Tour Magne."

He set about gaining permission to explore the earth inside the tower. After some trouble he managed to get the consent of the King, Henry IV., to excavate, the condition imposed being that it should all be done at his



WOMAN OF ARLES.



own expense, and the King further displayed his characteristic cautiousness by stipulating that two-thirds of any treasure-trove should go into the imperial exchequer. The story of the "Golden Cock" ends tamely enough, for neither the precious bird nor any valuables were found by the superstitious farmer, whose purse was made much lighter instead of heavier by his expensive search.

Nîmes, unlike Arles (the Gallic Rome), is still a prosperous and growing city, a popular place of residence and full of modern life. Its streets, shops, and open spaces, adorned with modern statues, many of great merit, are highly appreciated by all classes of its inhabitants, who delight in the beauty of their town. The older families from the smaller towns around recognise the attractions of the largest city in the lower valley of the Rhone, and seek it as a place of residence and retirement.

The modern churches are perhaps beautiful to a modern taste; St. Baudile with its twin needle-pointed spires, St. Perpetué with its single spire tapering like a pyramid, or St. Paul with its Roman-Byzantine front, have a completeness that the Cathedral of St. Castor lacks, but they have not its old associations. St. Castor is surrounded by houses, and the only view that can be ob-

tained of it is from the tiny square into which its west door faces—an unforgettable little picture.

High up just under the pediment there is, carved in deep relief, a series of figures of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. They represent scenes from the Old Testament, and have the rare merit of telling their story with a simple directness that cannot fail to be recognised by the meanest intelligence. It is thought that the Cathedral stands on the spot that was formerly graced by a Roman temple, and it is a likely enough supposition, for the early Christians in the southern Gallic towns generally selected the sites of Pagan temples for erecting places of worship.

The interior of the church, often restored and rebuilt at later periods, to-day presents a romanesque appearance, and has a very solemn and mournful aspect when dressed for a funeral. Curtains of sombre velvet encase the porch, and the little tapers carried by the mourners throw a weird light on the procession of priests and choir boys as they pass up the great central nave. Although the Church is disestablished and disendowed all through France, the ministrations of the clergy are still sought when the end comes, and these last rites for the dead are of daily occurrence in the South.



THE CATHEDRAL  
NIMES.







The revolutionary South is very conservative in many of its customs. The women still gather round the wells to fill their pitchers, and one can without difficulty eliminate the twentieth century and imagine the daily scene and life in Roman Gaul. The warm climate and small stuffy rooms of many of the older buildings induce a preference for the open air, and one can often see the domestic drudges turning the drums of the coffee-roasters by the side of the *Maison Carrée* or sawing logs for firewood in the old way, holding the saw between the knees and with the hands passing the timber backwards and forwards over its jagged edge.

From the railway station at Nîmes the broad Boulevard Feuchiers, lined with four rows of plane-trees, leads to a large open space, the Esplanade. Round this public circus there is an oval balustrade, the designer of which seems, perhaps unconsciously, to have been influenced by the great Arena which stands quite near. Even the stone seats preserve the Roman traditions in their heavy construction. The most important café in the town stands in the Esplanade, and in winter the pavement outside is covered with a thick mat upon which the chairs and table stand. A great coke stove stands in the middle, and

customers sit round the tables and fire listening to the music until the small hours of the morning. Paris herself can offer no better fare.

The "Pont du Gard," which was one of Agrippa's greatest engineering feats, remains the most colossal Roman monument in France. Remoulins, the little village that lies nearest to the bridge, is easily reached by



train either from Nîmes or Avignon, and the road along the banks of the Gard is full of rural charm, for it passes vineyards, homesteads, ploughed fields, and green pastures. Great steep hills rising up on either side of the river enclose the valley, and when one suddenly catches sight of the towering masonry of the aqueduct that spans the river the sensations aroused are bewildering.

Three great tiers of arches stretch across the river, and frame in the whole horizon. The wonderful warm

colour of the masonry contrasts against the sky, which, framed in the fifty golden arches, assumes an intensity that no pigment could reproduce. On closer inspection it is seen that the stones of which this giant is composed are laid one upon the other, fitted and adjusted without



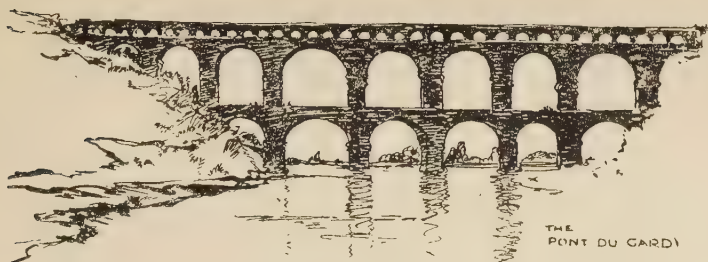
the aid of mortar, and that even the smaller arches of the third tier are laid in the same fashion. The channel, however, which carried the water along the top is lined with hard cement. This tunnel is partly roofed with large flat stones placed at intervals, and leaving gaps open to the sky.

To stand on the top of this immense pile of masonry

and survey the valley and distant country is to add a unique sensation to life's experiences. The river is far below with a toylike mill upon its edge, the winding roadway is dotted with specks that look like insects, and the far-off mountains float like clouds in the distant haze. From whatever point of view it is contemplated—from above or below—from a distance or from at hand it fills the mind with an unbounded respect for the genius of its builders. As in the case of the arenas, mere measurement fails to convey any idea of its vastness. That it is 880 feet or so long and 160 feet high may be interesting to builders and engineers, but to the majority of spectators these figures utterly fail to express anything of the magnificence of the Pont du Gard. Like the Maison Carrée and the amphitheatres of Nîmes and Arles, the aqueduct has figured in many a picture and engraving.

The rainbow of stone that fills the sky in Robert's romantic picture now in the Louvre conveys some of the beauty of the "Bridge," but fails to suggest the grandeur or its size. Agrippa and his soldiers accomplished more than a difficult engineering feat when they carried the waters of Uzès through hills and over valleys to their much-honoured colony of Nemausus. The Pont du

Gard is far too noteworthy and imposing a structure to have escaped the attentions of the romantic imaginations of the Middle Ages, and a legend has been handed down to the effect that the Devil himself built it, and required as payment for his stupendous task the soul of



the first living creature who should cross it. The first living creature was a hare (the natives presumably being backward in risking their souls); and the Devil, exasperated at the poor reward for all his trouble, turned the hare into stone, and to-day ingenious natives point to a curious Roman device carved on the keystone of one of the arches and call it the hare of the Pont du Gard.





ORANGE



## VIII

### ORANGE

ORANGE seems at first thought more intimately associated with comparatively modern history than with the fortunes of the Roman colonists of Gaul. Its name at once recalls the acquisition of liberty by the Netherlands and the establishment of free institutions in Britain. But one of the most important monuments of Roman times stands in the little town, and connects it by stronger links with the early struggles between the Gauls and the Cimbri and Teutons or the more disciplined legions of Marius and Cæsar.

Had it not been for the ravages of time and the vandalism of the Middle Ages, the Triumphal Arch which stands where the Lyons road enters the town from the north would tell its own story so plainly that archæological speculators would have been spared much conjecture and difference of opinion. That this arch commemorates some great event or series of events of great importance

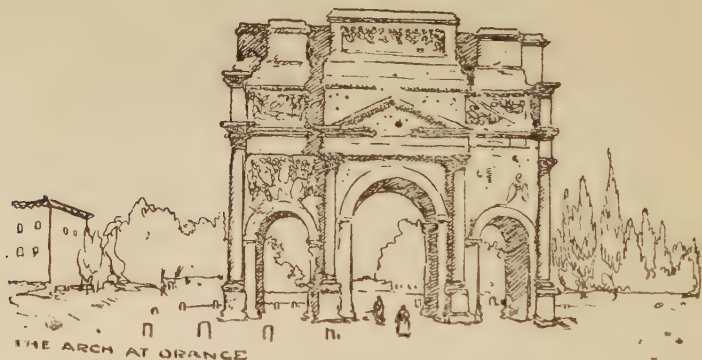
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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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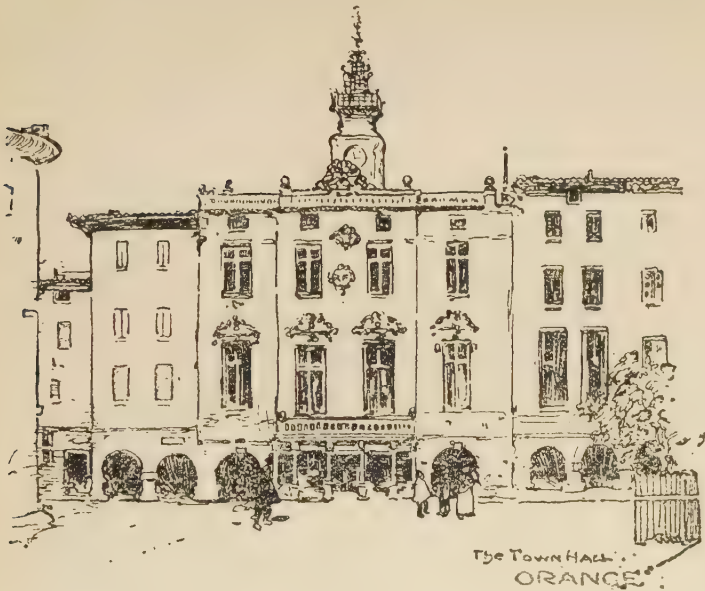
is unquestionable, for its size places it in the front rank of triumphal arches. Only two extant surpass it—that of Constantine and the Arch of Septimus Severus at Rome. The triumphal arch in commemoration of great victories was a purely Roman institution, and one is immediately faced with the query, when standing in front of the great



archway at Orange, what Roman general and which victory does it celebrate?

The monument has been studied and examined for nearly three centuries, and conflicting opinions still obtain concerning it. The arch is in a good state of preservation in spite of the many dangers it has passed through. In the Middle Ages one of the de Baux family, who was also a Prince of Orange, turned the triumphal arch into a

fortress, and the sculptures on the east front suffered much damage. The Prince evidently treated the great arch much in the same way as his family did the rocks of Les Baux. He altered and built round it staircases



and rooms, and erected a great tower over the attic, making it the watch-tower or donjon of a fortress that has vanished centuries ago.

Whether these building operations of Raymond de Baux did more to preserve the arch than to damage it cannot

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROvence

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be known, but to-day it retains many of its original features in remarkably good condition. The great block of masonry has three arches, the centre one larger than the other two. On each of its façades there are four fluted Corinthian columns which support a cornice and pediment of great delicacy. The sculptures that remain well defined upon the west front are symbols of battles by land and sea ; they tell of captives taken and victories won. Carved in rich profusion are spears and javelins, arms and armour, helmets, breastplates and shields, prows of war galleys, rigging, ropes and anchors, gladiators and slaves, male and female captives.

The different theories as to the origin of this arch have each been supported by apparently good evidence. Suetonius, the Roman historian of the first century, is quoted as the authority that Domitius Ahenobarbus celebrated a triumph in Gaul, which gave his name to the road he traversed. The Domitian way, the route Domitius is supposed to have followed, was via Orange, Carpentras, and Cavaillon, and at each of these places he is reported to have erected the triumphal arches, and that would make all three of these date from the second century before Christ.

The next theory, which for a long time has had its supporters, makes Marius the hero whose triumph it celebrates; and they point to the name of Marius carved



OLD HOUSES AT ORANGE

on one of the shields of the monument in support of their contention. Julius Cæsar has been suggested as the possible builder, and so has Octavius; but the general



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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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opinion held to-day is that it was erected during the reign of Tiberius to commemorate his overthrow of Julius Sacrovir, who tried to incite the Gauls to rebel against Rome A.D. 21. This theory has been supported by the discovery of the marks of nails which held in position the bronze letters of an inscription removed by Raymond de Baux when he transformed the arch into a fortress in the thirteenth century. These marks have been supposed to correspond with the first letters of the name of Tiberius; but whatever the victory may have been that the triumphal arch commemorates, its presence in Orange is one of many proofs of the importance of the ancient city of Arausio.

The ramparts and towers that surrounded the Roman town have all disappeared. Visigoth and Teuton broke down the power of the Empire, demolishing its works on every hand. The Saracens in turn possessed the town, and fierce battles raged around it before Charlemagne drove them out. In the Middle Ages it was subjected to the continued strife and warfare of contending feudal factions, but the Arch and the Theatre remain to speak of its former greatness.

At the opposite side of the town from where the Lyons

ORANGE

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the finest wall in all his wide kingdom. It awakens emotions akin to those one feels on beholding "The Pyramids" of Egypt, or its nearer neighbour the "Pont du Gard."

This wall forms the back of the proscenium of the Roman theatre, and is the most unique specimen in existence. The great façade, with its projecting corbels which supported tall masts, its rows of blind and open arches, even though damaged, much worn, and shorn of its carvings, has a noble grandeur due mainly to its size. Originally there was a forecourt, bounded at either end by two projecting structures, which gave a greater architectural beauty to the pile. The Theatre, although so purely Roman, is built at the foot of the hill which is used for the cavea, a practice that was adopted invariably by the Greeks and seldom by the Romans.

Inside, the stage must have occupied more and the orchestra less space than in the Greek theatre. The great background formed by the back of the stage was probably embellished with niches containing statues and framed with costly marble columns. Over the central or royal door which opened on to the stage, it is supposed that a colossal statue of an Emperor was placed, and the whole

of the stage was roofed over with a richly panelled ceiling. In the large wings on either side of the stage were the dressing- and green-rooms for the actors, as well as waiting- and refreshment-rooms for the higher social grades of the public. The seats for the spectators are cut out of the



THEATRE AT ORANGE

hill, and form an ascending series of horseshoe-shaped steps which could accommodate about seven thousand spectators.

In the seventeenth century the Princes of Orange, who dwelt in a stronghold upon the hill overlooking the theatre, attached it to their castle, converting it into a fortress. Much of its ornamentation disappeared at this period,

and more was destroyed at a later date when the town was taken by Louis XIV., who ordered the demolition of the castle and fortress. A squalid town of houses and stables occupied the interior of the Theatre after this; but happily they were all cleared out at the beginning of the last century, and to-day the monument is jealously guarded by a Government department.

From the hilltop behind the castle one looks over a country as rich as any in Provence. The Rhone glides through meadows, orchards, vineyards, and great mulberry plantations, past little red-tiled farmhouses, and long white roads lined by tall poplars and thickset hedges.

Orange is the gateway to Roman Gaul, and its two monuments are a magnificent introduction to the neighbouring towns of Arles and Nîmes. There are many curious streets and houses in the town, and the Hôtel de Ville, which stands in the principal square, is a pleasing bit of seventeenth-century architecture. Down one of the narrow streets near the great wall of the Theatre there stands a little church surmounted by an old crumbling tower. The interior of this ancient little building is so striking in contrast to the usual magnificence displayed in the churches of Provence, that one is not surprised to



THE  
PROTESTANT CHURCH  
ORANGE





discover that in it the Protestants of Orange worshipped. The plain whitewashed walls are reminiscent of the churches of Holland—perhaps the only association discoverable in the town with the Stadholders, who were also Princes of Orange. Many of the older streets have quaint arcades with bold round arches that naturally suggest a Roman origin.

Carpentras lies to the east of Orange and Avignon, about fifteen miles from either place. In the old days the dusty mud-stained diligences plied from Avignon to Carpentras, but to-day the cross-country motor-bus has found in Provence a hearty welcome and plenty of passengers, and the ancient relationship between the two towns is more closely knit together. Carpentras is no longer the important town it was before the Revolution. From being a Roman town of great consequence, “Carpentorate,” it grew during the Middle Ages to become the capital of the Papal province, the “Comtat Venaissin.” When Pope Clement V., by the orders of Philip the Fair, removed his Papal See from Rome, his time was divided between Carpentras and Avignon, and it was in the former town that he breathed his last.

In 1305, when Clement took up his temporary abode in Carpentras, it was strongly fortified with machicolated battlements, towers and gateways, and all the other accessories of a mediæval town. Churches had been established for ages, the oldest one, St. Siffrein, dating from the sixth century. The present Cathedral of that name is the fifth building that has been erected upon the same site : the first having been built in the sixth century, the second in the eighth or ninth, the third in the tenth, and the fourth at the end of the thirteenth century. Nothing remains of the two earliest, although some parts of the third building were incorporated in the fourth.

The present church was built by the anti-pope Benedict XIII., who at the period of the schism had a large following among the clergy of France. He thought to establish himself and the Papacy in Carpentras, having previously been kept a prisoner at Avignon by the factions who refused to acknowledge his papal authority. He was, however, only successful in retaining the loyalty of a portion of the French Church and nobility, for a few years later, in 1409, the General Council of Cardinals met at Pisa, together with the influential envoys of France and England, and the two rival Popes, Benedict XIII. and

Gregory XII., were both tried and deposed for contumacy and the violation of their solemn engagements. But for this Carpentras might have been a second Avignon.



CATHEDRAL OF ST SIFFREIN  
CARPENTRAS

The Cathedral of St. Siffrein, which Benedict started in the Gothic style, was never completed in a satisfactory manner. The south porch remains, however, a most

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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beautiful piece of Gothic, with delicately designed and carved pinnacles and arches, worthy of a much finer building. The west front of the Cathedral is a makeshift, and although the flowered pillars in the buttresses are very beautiful, the porch and doorways are of much later date,



entirely out of keeping with the character of the building. There is plenty of elaborate decoration in the interior, for the chapels contain pictures by Mignard and Parrocel, and there are also great decorative pictures of the life of the name-saint, St. Siffrein, who was the Bishop of Carpentras in the sixth century.

The Cathedral is the fortunate possessor of one or two nails from the true Cross, which are exhibited on certain days from a small gallery that projects into the nave over the south entrance. Over the west doorway there



are four pictures in magnificent carved wood frames which compel the attention more than the works of art they surround. The frames are the work of an artist who accomplished much of the beautiful wood carving in the Cathedral. His name was Jacques Bernas, but the names

of the painters of the pictures have been absolutely forgotten.

In the early part of the nineteenth century Carpentras suffered a severe loss. The ramparts which had hemmed in and protected the town for five centuries were pulled down, the lofty Porte d'Orange alone excepted. This magnificent tower, which is 120 feet high, crenellated with a machicolated battlement, and pierced with only one comparatively small entrance, is a perfect example of mediæval defensive architecture. The houses which now stand on the site of the ancient ramparts look mean and insignificant; even the great plane-trees that line the broad avenue which surrounds the town look like dwarfs when compared with the ancient gate. Quaint flights of steps lead from this avenue up to the town, and rare picturesque bits of old tiled houses delight the eye at unexpected turnings.

The town is full of twistings and winding streets, ancient doorways with richly sculptured fronts, sunny courts, shady boulevards, and charming vistas. It is delightfully situated, with a lovely country spread like a rich carpet all around its base. From the courtyard in front of the Église de l'Observance, the view, over the



valley in which are the ruins of a Roman aqueduct, to the bare slopes of the snow-crested Mont Ventoux, is one



THE ARCH AT  
CARPENTRAS.

of varied charm. Groups of little houses peep out from amongst the trees ; clumps of tall cypress, ranged like a



wall of spires, protect the vineyards from the blighting mistral's chill ; villages nestle in the shelter of trees whose rich foliage lingers long after summer has departed ; a Provençal landscape lies all around the town, bewitching the eye and captivating the emotions.

Standing in a small courtyard surrounded by the walls of a seventeenth-century bishop's palace, now the Hôtel de Ville, is a small triumphal arch which has been battered by wind and rain for twenty centuries. It is only a single arch, and considerable doubt exists as to its exact age. On the two sides there are sculptured in high relief figures of captive Gauls. The columns that form each angle of the arch are little more than fragments, but the engaged columns on the inside have suffered less. This arch was supposed by some archæologists to have some connection with the great arch at Orange, but nothing can be proved with any certainty. It remains one of those puzzling relics of the past that will continue to provoke differences of opinion until the fabric crumbles out of human sight and mingles with the dust of ages.

A little local train runs from Tarascon through vineyards, ploughed fields, and pasture lands, stopping at tiny



FOUNTAIN  
TO  
NOSTRADMUS.  
AT  
ST. REMY



wayside shelters too insignificant to warrant a name. Its destination is Orgon, but about midway between the limits of its journey it stops at St. Remy, a little town of about five thousand inhabitants. This is a typical Provençal village, full of traditions, customs, and leisured existence, like hundreds of others in the Rhone valley, and but for its close proximity to the ancient Roman town of Glanum Livii, few strangers would ever walk its streets. It still retains traces of a former prosperity, and many of the houses in its quaint streets are embellished with fine portals of the Renaissance architecture.

It has had famous and illustrious citizens too, whom it honours with statues that ornament the public places. The astrologer, Nostradamus, who was patronised by the great and believed in by all, lived for some years in retirement in the little town. It was he who was indirectly responsible for the ruin of the poor imaginative man who spent his time and fortune in excavating the ground floor of the Tour Magne in the vain search for a "golden fowl." History does not relate if the astrologer's prediction "that a farmer would make his fortune by the discovery of a golden cock" ever did come true, or if the disappointed treasure-seeker

of the Tour Magne ever sought an interview with the prophet.

The oldest inhabitants of St. Remy may tell of the gradual decline in the splendour of its fate, in the merri-ment of its song and dance ; but the youngest glory in the Sunday visits of the Cinema. Occasionally a strolling troupe of players invade the town, and in the open air, with a sad semblance of gaiety, emulate the " Jongleurs " of old in their efforts to amuse. But the men in these little villages make their own amusements, and in the summer evenings they congregate in the public squares, and under the shelter of the great plane-trees play at their game of bowls, the same game that is popular in Italy, Spain, and Portugal, and even across the Mediterranean in Tunis and Algiers. Any piece of ground, even the highway, will serve for their purpose, and casual passers-by or spectators run no little risks from the balls, which are not trundled or rolled along the ground, but are thrown high through the air.

The four cafés which St. Remy boasts are large enough for its wants, and their clients, dressed in fustian, indulge with temperance in absinthe, cards, and tobacco, most of them retiring early in the evening, for St. Remy does not

keep late hours like Nîmes or Arles. The Church at St. Remy is a most imposing building for so small a town ; it is classic in design and modern in construction, but it is built beneath an ancient belfry with a tapering spire, Gothic and beautiful, a relic of the fourteenth century.

A long straight road, sheltered and shaded from wind



and sun by great plane-trees that range on either side, leads from the town to the foot of the Alpilles. The vista is extensive, and the rugged hills that end it assume the appearance of a gigantic fortress.

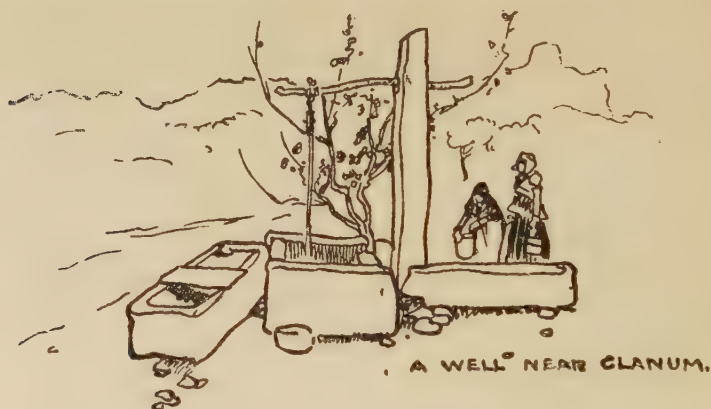
Just outside the town, sheltered by a great chestnut-tree, there stands an ancient church, " Our Lady of Pity,"

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROvence

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the walls of its beautiful porch abandoned to the bill-poster, and its steps and floor to the village children. All the way up this white road there are ancient bits of masonry utilised in modern building, and many other evidences of the Roman occupation. Here, by the roadside, there is a curious deep well, with the mouth protected



by four great slabs of stone set on end forming a rough but solid parapet ; a tall stone stands up on end beside the others, and through a hole in it a branch of a tree is thrust, from which is suspended the pulley-wheel and rope to lower the bucket into the waters below. Two great troughs carved out of solid stone lie by the side ready for use as washtubs. They look like tombs from



the Alyscamps at Arles, or possibly some other ancient burial-ground. Who can say ?

All the little homesteads have small patios in front or



at the sides of them ; vines trail up the columns that support the lean-to roofs, columns that are either of Roman workmanship or imitations, but the ancient

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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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character is well preserved. About a mile up this road are two monuments of the earliest Roman time ; grey as the hills that form a background to them, delicate in contrast to nature's rugged sculptures, they are memorials of the skill of hands whose work was finished two thousand years ago. The sculptors have been lavish of their time and talents, and although the freshness of their delicate and bold carvings has worn off, time has softened and mellowed them, even as it does a refined or noble human face. The smaller monument is a specimen of a triumphal arch, much damaged, but what remains is more beautiful in its proportions and simplicity than many of the larger triumphal arches found in Provence.

The other monument, the tomb of the Julii, has an inscription on the architrave of the second story,—SEX . L . M . JULIEI . C . F . PARENTIBUS . SUEIS . which translated means that the monument was raised to the memory of their parents by Sextus, Lucius, and Marcus Julii, the sons of Caius. It is a mausoleum of exquisite symmetry and distinction ; on the square base two bas-reliefs of battle and hunting scenes indicate that Caius was a warrior who was no less distinguished in the chase than on the battle-field. The second story is a

square turret which has four niches, and is enriched with fluted columns at each corner ; the entablature above is embellished with mouldings and ornament and surmounted by a small circular turret, with ten fluted Corinthian columns, inside of which are two statues wanting the heads. The amount of well-considered orna-



ment lavished upon these memorials, one of victories accomplished, the other of the highly honoured dead, is an eloquent tribute to the sentiments that animated the Romans as well as to the distinction and skill of their artists.

These two solitary monuments are all that remain of the ancient city, but they stand steadfast at the foot of the rugged hills, the faithful sentinels of a vanished empire. Far removed from the busy life of cities to-day, they have

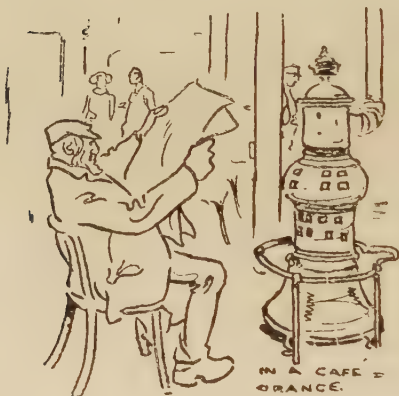
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## A TOUR THROUGH OLD PROVENCE

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known in the past the pressure of the multitude and the noisy hum of humankind, for the ancient town nestled around them on all sides.

How it happened that the Visigoths, who in the fifth



century destroyed the Roman city, allowed the arch to remain, is one of those puzzles that never will be solved; for on the two sides of the triumphal arch their ancestors are represented as captives led in chains. Works of

art, precious and beautiful, had no influence to stay their devastating hand; culture made no appeal to their rugged natures, for in their rage against their persecuting masters they razed to the ground works of fine art and beauty that were the pride and glory of the greatest Empire the world has ever seen.

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